/821.8J63S>C1/

1/6

79660
Johnson, L.

821.8
J63s

Morton D. Zabel
1932

THE COLLEGE AND SEMINARY LIBRARY
Naperville, Illinois

Presented by

Morton Dauwen
Zabel

SOME WINCHESTER LETTERS OF LIONEL JOHNSON

SOME WINCHESTER LETTERS OF LIONEL JOHNSON

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
RUSKIN HOUSE, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

First published in 1919

(All rights reserved)

J63s

Not on the vulgar mass
Called " Work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price ;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice :

But all the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account :
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount :

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped :
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

RABBI BEN EZRA

LIBRARY

79660

LIBRARY

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

LIONEL PIGOT JOHNSON was born on March 15, 1867, at Broadstairs, and had a Celtic strain in his ancestry. He spent six years as a scholar in College at Winchester, and then proceeded to New College. He was a great admirer of Walter Pater, of whom he saw a good deal at Oxford. His literary period, so far as the public is concerned, may be said roughly to have extended from 1890 to 1900, when he lived in London and supported himself by various writings for periodicals, many of which have since been collected and published. The work for which he cared was always the unremunerative one of poetry. In 1891 he became a Roman Catholic, and he died at the age of thirty-five on October 4, 1902.

INTRODUCTION

IT is thought that these letters, written by a scholar of the College of St. Mary, Winton, may be of interest to a wider circle than that to which they were originally addressed, in several respects. In the first place it will be observed that they deal not with personal or temporary affairs, but with general questions of a kind which have interested the whole thinking part of the whole human race for centuries. They are further remarkable as the production of a schoolboy between the ages of sixteen and eighteen; showing as they do a most unusually extensive acquaintance with English literature and a great sense of values. It is true on looking back from the vantage-ground of middle age one may detect traces of immaturity, such as the excessive praise of Emerson, but these are few and far between. The letters also appear to have an interest, at any rate to contemporaries, in bringing again before one's mind's eye some of the outstanding

figures of the later Victorian age. So it has been thought that though the class to which such a collection would appeal may be small, none the less to them its appeal would be a real one.

My first recollection of Lionel Johnson is as a small College man with that pale oval face of the frontispiece to *Poetical Works* reproduced from the very photograph referred to in these letters. It was set off by the severe College gown, and suggested even to a Philistine something wistful and appealing. My own acquaintance with him really began in the school library, where he assisted me with suggestions as to the books I should read. It remained throughout rather on the literary and philosophic plane than on any basis of great personal intimacy. Though a year or two my junior, and though I had for him a passionate devotion and admiration which still survives after thirty-five years, my prevailing attitude to him was one of reverence and awe. As he says more than once in his letters, he appeared to be unimpressionable, unemotional, undemonstrative—in a word, he walked through life aloof like some ascetic saint. My own temperament was the exact converse, and I recognize that I was

often chilled by this aloofness, although I believe, so far as his nature permitted it, he was fond of me and valued my friendship.

Oxford saw the beginning of the tragedy which culminated in his early cutting off and the loss to the world of another genius. The poor boy! the wonderful child! the loving angel! for an angel of God he was undoubtedly intended to be, and in all associations in my memory of him was and still is. I care nothing for such external facts about his life as have been forced upon my notice, I care nothing for the measure of the world's coarse thumb, this, and no less, was he worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Filled always with a passionate desire to protect and to cherish, I was hopelessly and inevitably thwarted by the very facts of the situation. He had, as he explains in one of his own letters, an arid home life, a lonely school life. What he wanted was a mother and a wife, or a wife who would have been a mother, as all good wives are: some simple loving human thing to cherish him against the cold and alien world and to enable his spirit to move undimned along its natural path. Look at these extracts from his letters, and

compare them pityingly with the pitiable truth: "I have one monotone to which I will intone my life: I will be a priest." . . . "I long . . . to live in seclusion . . . infusing beauty and the simplicity of love . . . into minds fresh from God and the great sea. And after that . . . to wear out the best of my life in our great towns. What an ambition! Sincerely, what an almost inconceivable aim: and oh, to realize it!" . . . "I go about my daily trivialities with the words of the Most High on my closed lips and in my heart, breaking for a little love." . . . "But to one who, like myself, believes that he has the truth in inspiration, personal, uncommunicable truth, it is very hard to be unable to use it, to feel himself a temple of the Holy Ghost, yet see in himself no signs of sacrifice." . . . "I think I shall not die yet—that I shall waste on into old age and memories of a beautiful life: for life is meaningless without beauty, and everything is, or becomes at need, beautiful." Yet these extracts show the true Lionel: not only the later genius of "The Art of Thomas Hardy," but the loving, suffering man, burning with zeal to help and comfort his fellow-sufferers in the world. I have to thank him for the love of Browning,

for an outlook on life which has been my salvation in many a dark hour, and for a contribution of courage and high hope. Would that he might have lived to the full the life for which he was intended, and that his message and his influence might have been known to a wider circle! But it was not to be.

THE EDITOR.

March 1919.

Some Winchester Letters

To A.

College,
October 7, 1883.

The same post that brought me your welcome letter brought me another from a clerical friend of mine, a young man of ultra High Church views; amongst other amusing remarks, he said that as my spiritual welfare was his especial care he would "warn me against the latest development of infidelity: the Devil would come to me robed even as an angel of light, and would seduce even the very elect; he referred to a strange movement in connection with Buddhism, which was so fascinating in its assumption of high spiritual tone that he was certain it would ensnare me to my perdition." I am meditating a fitting reply to this excellent young man. I congratulate you on your first plunge into the turbid waters of Browning.

I have not the smallest wish to go into the Church; but my choice of a career is limited

to that and literature; to tell you the truth, I should like to burst upon the astonished world as a poet; there you have the height of my ambition. Somewhat conceited, is it not? but the amount of poetry, if I may use the word, that I have already perpetrated, would fill a respectable volume. I should like to turn out a kind of Matthew Arnold in a more professedly "religious" way; i.e., combine the position of a man of letters with that of a quasi-religious lecturer. The only reason I should have for taking Orders would be the intense desire of getting hold of some of the rotten old pulpits occupied by dotards, and exploding some more sensible and higher doctrines than any I have yet heard; but the explosion might bring the Church down about my ears. People of a certain class might accept from a "priest" teaching they would reject from a layman. Still, I never really think the Church will be my destination.

Why do people want dogmas, and refuse to live without abstruse creeds? and why do they want to know everything, when they are quite as happy in reverent ignorance? I never felt the want of definite creeds, or of an anthropomorphic Saviour; I don't understand the need of them. If you want a powerful anti-clerical defence of the Godhead of Jesus, read Browning's "Christmas Eve and Easter Day"; it is quite plain, and very powerfully put; the

best thing about it being, that it leaves you to think what you like, without inflicting Church doctrine upon you; the poem comes in vol. 5 of his Works. I agree with you in thinking it improbable that Christ's teaching has been very materially perverted; it is generally easy to separate His own pure grain from the chaff His reporters mixed up with it. I cannot understand your view as to Paul being one of the initiated; to me, reading his Epistles and Myers' *St. Paul*, it seems impossible to regard him otherwise than as an enthusiast for the divinity of Christ with a metaphysical turn of mind. I must apologize for troubling you with so much illegibility. I have just come from Communion; I should not think much of a religion that had no such declaration of universal brotherhood. I will tell you my impressions of the book when I have got it. Positivism I regard as the height of absurdity; infinitely worse in its bondage of dogma than the Catholic Church.

As to exercise, I make no promise.

To A.

College,
October 14, 1883.

I should have answered you before, but I have had too much to do. Dr. Ridding told

me yesterday I would become a proverb in the mouths of the printer's devils who had to read my MSS. I will attempt to solve the particular difficulty you mentioned in Browning; Cantos V and VI on page 171 briefly mean this. The first opening study and reading of early Greek writings is simple enough, an "outside frame" to the rest of Greek literature, as hazel trees fringe a wood; but through Greek writings we see a wide passage opening out wider, till at last the study of Greek brings the reader to the thought and study of Italy and the Renaissance and the youth and new expansions of art and literature to be found there; and, although Italy is all the time a "woman country," languid and effeminate in appearance, yet it has always had a strange attraction for men, e.g., Shelley, Byron; and so Browning is willing to follow her leadership. You will find Browning's thought always simple, but the expression of the thought is somewhat hard; all the same, he is more worth mastering than any one else I know of. Mr. Bradlaugh is contemptibly vulgar; his logic, which is considerable, and his insensibility, which is incredible, have combined to produce clever but absolutely worthless books; he cannot have any real influence for good. I have none of his works; should burn them if I had. To come to the real subject. I quite feel the sense of power and nobility in the Buddhist system;

but it revolts me. I could not find any rest in a religion that required arithmetic and scientific knowledge. I have read carefully the first eight chapters of Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*; I have glanced at, but am about to read through, the rest. My position of mind with regard to them is this; I quite believe that the Powers, etc., they assume are real, that their lives are high in ideal; but that religion must be popular, not scientific. Were I alone in the world such a life of abnegation and purity and absorption of self into deity would be the ideal for me; but think of the people you meet every day, and then of that system! I am too essentially Western to appreciate Buddhism, it is true; but it is not, to speak technically, "necessary for salvation"; i.e., a man may live the highest life without it. I have an idea that religion must vary under various circumstances; let the East keep its lofty ideal, and the West a simpler Christianity. I hate the very thought of degrees in religious questions; I hate the idea of anyone patronizing me, whether the head of the adepts, or an Evangelical parson. I have nothing to say against the religion of Buddha: it is an extremely noble one; but, as I said before, it repels me, chills me. I would rather be a Roman Catholic. Again, that this occult knowledge should have been in the world for ages, yet only intrusted to a few, is horrible; I can believe it all, but with

the same kind of feelings with which I should regard a man who deliberately withheld an important discovery because he thought the time had not come for revealing it. I hope I have not offended you with my comments on Buddhism, but it has not enough warmth and light and love to satisfy me. The Dean preached a grand sermon to-day on the expansiveness and all-embracingness of Christianity, which could shed its worn-out dogmas as a snake does its skin. This all sounds rather Churchy, but I will not join the Church. I would rather not send you any of my productions, they are invisible to all but myself. Do read Browning; I feel much more cheerful about things in general when I have read him. Read, in the volume you are reading, "Saul," "The Guardian Angel," "Two in the Campagna," "Old Pictures in Florence," and, above all, "Evelyn Hope." You will understand them, with careful reading; and there is not one which will not inspire you with an ecstatic admiration and love of Browning when you really see through it.

I apologize for this lengthy mass of illegibility.

To A.

College,
October 16, 1883.

I have been hardly just towards Buddhism! the chapter on Nirvana is too transcendentally grand not to be a real true ideal. But is it all practical? I mean, could the present world go on if Buddhism and the struggles it entails were prevailing ideas? I admit that for those for whom it is possible it is the supremest ideal: but is it not rather hard upon everyday people that they are placed by no fault of their own in situations in which this striving after the high state of spirituality would be impossible? Have you read Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*? I am reading it now with inexpressible delight: but then, you see, it keeps the science in the background and gives prominence to the spiritual side of the system. Who is Madame Blavatsky? I keep hearing allusions to her, and reading about her, as a mysterious personage, without the faintest idea as to who she is. Have you read *Mr. Isaacs*? If so, what is meant by "the groves of Simla where Colonel Olcott, Madame Blavatsky, and Mr. Sinnett perform their mysterious rites"? The whole book is pervaded with allusions to the Adepts. I read your book till about two o'clock last night, and then perambulated Chamber Court in the

rain to get my thoughts clear. I am entirely unable to get over my repugnance to the high tone of science and unspiritual knowledge that pervades the system. Mathematics never yet were of any use for statesmen or religionists. But the idea of Nirvana (which I had grossly misunderstood before) is enough to convert the most determined Western sceptic. Do Buddhists practice celibacy? If so, it entails difficulties, and confirms what I said as to the impossibility of the religion of Buddha ever really spreading: it is true and good for those for whom it is possible, of whom I shall never be one, much though I should long to be. Excuse this disconnected discourse, but I wanted to apologize for any injustice my last letter might have done. Do read Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*: it throws a sidelight on Buddhism: a new edition is just out. My clerical friend has just entreated me to "consider whether I should like to be in outer darkness with Buddha, or at the feet of Christ in perfect light"!!

To A.

College,
October 16, 1883.

I was glad and sorry to get your last letter: glad, because your partially recognizing my difficulties proves that they are not entirely

the fault of my weak understanding: sorry, that I should have in any way disturbed your faith in Buddhism. A strange position, ours! two of young England's rising generation in search of a creed. I have come more or less to the conclusion that there is no absolute, universal Truth—that each of us has to struggle on, and make his Truth for himself. I can conceive of no religion which can equally satisfy me and a converted coal-heaver: again, abstract German metaphysics may and do attract and interest me, but I feel that they no more help me than does Church of England orthodoxy. I quite know what you mean by an intense feeling of loathing and disgust and despair at things in general: once I was late for names' calling because I had walked right away without knowing it for six miles. But, whatever else may be doubtful, I feel certain that I am not in the world, with an individuality of my own, to be miserable; I am not responsible for my existence, and I have a right to be happy. Then, it follows that happiness is attainable, and, of course, of mind as well as, and more than, body. Then, I have a right to be happy; the means of happiness exists. I am unable to find it in established Churches, systems of thought, etc., ergo, I must make it for myself. I have got as far as that but, first, I do not know how to find my happiness; secondly, it seems selfish not to try and make other people's

happiness as well; but I started by saying that my happiness depends upon (or rather my right to happiness depends upon) my own individuality, but I have no idea of other people's individualities; so that I am intrinsically selfish; ergo, miserable. So that I have been arguing in a circle and wasting time. But it remains the fact that I ought to be happy. Now that you have got six volumes of Browning, read "Abt Volger" in the fifth volume; it is, I think, intensely satisfying to people in our state of mind; in fact, Browning is my greatest consolation now. He studies and analyses the soul, and drags it to light, and shows the good inherent in it, and the nobility and comfort to be found even in trivial everyday lives; in fact, "the trivial round, the common task," etc. But I think that the world itself, nature, will do for me to worship if I can't find a God. I feel that I get more good watching a peculiar sky, a colour in autumn trees, etc., than by hundreds of prayers. Of one thing I am certain: that I lived before I came into my present stage of existence, and that I shall live again; not, necessarily, on this earth, or in the same personality, but again, somewhere, and somewhen. In the meantime, what Matthew Arnold calls "morality" and "conduct" will be a half guide. I would never willingly disturb another's faith, or try to pervert him to an absence of one. I can find

spiritual food in nature, as I said, in art, in poetry, in high ritual, in watching other people's characters; but these cannot make a Truth; my Christ is gone, and I cannot find another, or even the old one. I can't help writing to you; I must express what I think, it makes it all clearer to myself. But I will continue this to-morrow. My second letter may have explained my ideas more fully than my first, to which it was meant as a supplement.

October 18th, 10.30.

Just got your letter. It seems partly to confirm what I have said as to the necessity of each one of us, according to our educated capacities, making his own happiness spiritually; but it does not solve the question of selfishness. A poor man of limited faculties often feels that the parson's orthodoxy and his grandmother's Christianity do not meet his needs; he is unable to express his needs, but he feels them. Then, if you tell him that in thirty years he may attain to a high spiritual state, he would simply laugh at you. Buddhism may do for a few; but is it possible for people who, like myself, must work to get their living in one way or another? I know that my unreasoning objections, on the score of too much scientific technicality, to Buddhism, are not really of much weight; but if that were my only objection I don't

think it would influence me for a moment; but the impossibility of the religion being carried out *in England by men who are of sufficient appreciation and culture to carry it out elsewhere* appears to me an obstacle even to its limited diffusion. To come to earthly matters, I do take a great deal of exercise, for me. I am a member of the Shakespearean Society, and take leading female characters. I go out every day and declaim my part of Twyford Down. With repeated apologies for persisting in writing.

October 18th, 7.30.

Don't be alarmed: I shall finish this epistle some time or other. I begin to see: all this afternoon I walked round and round Hills reading the *Light of Asia*: the grandest poem I have read for years: it has made things clear. In its noble versified version of Buddha's first sermon it distinctly states that ultimate perfection can be reached, even by those who cling to earthly ties, after a longer succession of trials and transmigrations; this is what I wanted. I think Christ must have meant this by his teaching, which is almost the same as Buddha's. The Gospel of Buddha and Christ does teach a universal love, a tender sympathy for all men. You are unjust to Christianity when you say that it teaches that all the damned suffer equally—it is only rabid Protestants who do; the real, not unorthodox, Christianity, as

the Broad Churchmen hold it, teaches that punishment is in limited degrees, and cannot be eternal. But, of course, none of this sort of thing is to be found in the New Testament. On maturer reflection I don't see that Buddhism is not more scientific than other systems. Art is intensely scientific, poetry has laws: Positivism is unbearably loaded with scientific dogma. Just as in Christianity the life of Christ impels one to accept His teaching, so, to me, the life of Gautama impels me to belief in him. Both men, or, perhaps, Gods, are surrounded with a mass of legend: but the real personalities are gloriously distinct. I won't bore you any longer.

I can't resist quoting a passage from my clerical friend; he says: "Go into a dark room, light a candle; blow it out; feel the darkness round you; think of that as your Heaven; for Nirvana is annihilation; whereas in Heaven the vital spark of your soul will burn like an altar taper before the throne of God and all the blessed Saints." I quote from memory; I have lost his letter; but I think that is correct.

To A.

College,
October 21, 1883.

I have been formulating my yet remaining objections to Buddhism, and will briefly state

them. 1. (This objection is only my old one stated in other words.) Buddhism is, so to speak, too infinite; it compels you to throw your mind back and forward into boundless space and time, whilst the present insignificant world, or earth life, is full of untold misery; it was the sight, not of death only, but of mere human bodily suffering, that induced Gautama Buddha to resign his station and love to win the Truth. I am certain that he, in his own mind and words, meant that the grand, spiritual ideals and aims should be attainable by all, and the means of alleviating the mere temporary sufferings of this life. I know that you will not quite understand my insisting on this point; but when I spoke before of Happiness I meant, of course, the happiness given even to human lives and comforts by a high spiritual life. I have a dim kind of answer to my own objections, but I will not state it.

2. The higher life of one who has entered on the path forbids marriage; it is essential that a man should strive after the higher life; but if he does, he dies, and the world is one man less, externally; then why is man, as a corporeal animal, adapted for marriage on the one hand, and for the higher life on the other? You have no idea what a frightful gulf of doubt this opens to me; I begin to doubt either the reality of the grand series of world developments, or the justice of God, however

you may define the word "God." Can it be that this is so, that our faith and real aspiration may be tried, that the strength of our Karma may be realized? Even so, I think it is hard. You are wrong in supposing that I ever believed the old creeds: as a child I never believed: my mind is essentially sceptical: so much so that disbelief of anything other people tell me, or that I cannot see or prove, is sometimes a horrible mania. It is the sudden revelation of the possibilities of mankind in attaining to spiritual heights, even becoming Gods, that almost blinds me. I should like more intimate knowledge as to the state of mind and soul of the initiated: if they do really live in spirit. I have spent some time in carefully comparing the doctrines of Buddha with the teaching of Christ: they almost coincide, allowing for local differences of time and occasion. As Buddha has been mistaken for God in spite of his protests, so is Christ: both renounce their homes and quiet happiness to wander over their lands, to take away from death its sting, to teach us how to live: both have a gentleness and simplicity of character that draws all men unto them. I almost believe Christ was a re-incarnation of Buddha: at least I see little reason against it. The successive incarnations we undergo is perhaps meant to explain the apparent injustice I supposed with regard to the entire purity enjoined on us. Those who cannot over-

come the natural tendency of their natures in this life will be strengthened in the next life. The fact is that the whole system is so grand that I cannot see it distinctly: if I come close to it, it is too colossal to be seen as a whole: if I look from a distance, its vast size makes it dim. I have no longer any real doubts as to its truth: my objections are merely defects of sight which I shall overcome in time. Your cousin's letter is helpful: I do not feel, as I thought I should, that the idea of immutable law is chilling: I see that mutable law would be miserable and unsatisfactory: whilst salvation goes on always, and God is everywhere. The doctrine cannot, of course, be the same to all: but it presents all with that particular aspect which suits him best. And the especial nobility lies in its sublime disregard of those who do not openly profess to believe it, or who have never heard of it: it has the stamp of natural greatness on it. I will read the book through again, more carefully, and state what further objections to it I can find.

With regard to "Abt Volger," ix. x. xi. are the stanzas that contain the meaning: simple enough, as all his important parts always are. I like the Parody, it is forcible. Was at Lady Laura's for lunch: Salvation Army chief topic of conversation: the Doctor enthusiastic for it.

To A.

College,
October 22, 1883.

I have at last satisfactorily solved for myself the marriage difficulty. In my view of the question, the justice of God, unwilling to limit the number of those who might ultimately attain to Nirvana, has permitted and enjoined marriage as a means of increasing the number of the "saved"; since the married in one earth-life need not be married in the next: and, of course, marriage is not sin in itself. I am now quite reconciled to Buddhism, so far as I understand it. Its special nobility seems to me to be this: that whereas orthodox Christians can go on in a slip-shod way, trusting to deathbed repentance and priestly absolution, in Buddhism, as your cousin says, every act is a cause: every step in life, every thought and word and deed is of the utmost importance. This strikes me as the supreme height of moral grandeur. I know Mill's book on Comte well: very clever, but hardly fair. Myers' *Essays* are delightful: everything is, that he writes. Do you attempt at all to propagate the Gospel of Gautama? Most men at Oxford are, like St. Paul's Athenians, ready for some new thing, but ridiculing anything that contradicts their shallow philosophies. I think that Buddhism

should be preached openly, with care; the idea of secrecy and initiation are alien to English minds. I wish I knew more about the Elementals: it is one of Cardinal Newman's ideas that the operations of nature are carried on by invisible yet real agencies. I am carefully reading and digesting the doctrine of *Esoteric Buddhism*: it is very noble.

To A.

November 2, 1883.

I shall be delighted to exert myself to an unwonted extent next Tuesday afternoon with you.

I am absolutely confirmed in my Buddhism by reading *Plato*, whom study in Jowett's version: Plato distinctly describes the system of "world chains and planetary evolutions" in his own limited phraseology; and he gives an entirely accurate description of the state of Devachan and the conditions there of souls with varying degrees of Karma: he describes exactly the upward spiral process of the worlds: and when he is about to speak of these things he invariably introduces them with the words "these things I learnt from a certain man," once "this I was told by Er the Armenian, who was enabled to return to earth from death." He speaks of Socrates as having a personal

"Δαίμων" at his ear, who told him what to teach. Plato is quite convincing. Acting up to the creed is, of course, immensely difficult: but time works wonders. I have no more time just now, so, till Tuesday, vale!

Yesterday, in an essay for the Doctor on Religious Persecution, I dragged in a tolerably clear statement of Buddhism, expressing my personal views on the subject: I expect to be sat upon accordingly.

To A.

College,
November 11, 1883.

I have had no further communication from the Doctor on the subject of Buddhism. I should like to see his paper on Purity very much: the newspapers gave it in an unintelligible form: the other address you mention sounds disagreeable, but I should like to see it if it is not too much trouble to you.

My clerical friend has, since his last epistle, prepared an elaborate essay on the "Essential Genius of Protestant Christianity as contrasted with the False Doctrines of Oriental Superstition." Having digested this leviathan of a title, I read the MS. and returned it with thanks. It was the most foul-mouthed slander I ever read: it was abominable in its superficial

assumption of superiority. I quote one sentence: "If absolute annihilation is the end of existence, why not at once commit suicide?" He also said when I advised him to read *Esoteric Buddhism* that he was afraid of "touching the unclean thing."

I don't believe in Morris as a practical politician: he is the moving spirit of the Democratic Federation, which stamps him as Utopian: but he is an intense enthusiast, and worth listening to. I shall certainly think again about trying for the scholarship, but I am not a scholar, only an individual of literary tastes.

To A.

COLLEGE,
November 13, 1883.

Much obliged for the pamphlets. The Doctor is very good: so exceedingly refined, and at the same time outspoken. I think you had better take the other paper to heart if you intend to make a habit of tea-drinking at 2.30 a.m. Mrs. D. has been pouring out her motherly fears for you to me: she wanted to know why you had changed so, and were so unusually melancholy. I felt obliged to enlighten her a little on the subject of Buddhism, speaking of it lightly as your latest fancy: she entreats me to discourage you: I said I would do my

best: I hope my slight unveracities won't be visited upon me? The Daker preached a glorious sermon at St. John's last Sunday evening: he demolished St. Augustine, Socinus, Luther, Alford, and the Bishop of Bedford, declaring that the words "Be ye perfect, as your Father is perfect" meant what they said, i.e., that man is a potential God: in fact, he unconsciously preached pure Buddhism. Thanks for what you told me of Jowett's sermon: it must have been beautiful: but to my irreverent mind there is something ludicrous in the idea of Jowett meeting Pusey in Heaven. We have just finished the Phaedo with the Doctor, it is almost too pathetic to keep from tears. Compare the death of Socrates with that of Jesus: both are equally sublime. I speak to-night on Capital Punishment: good subject, but rather worn out. We had an excellent sermon from a man who examined in Chapel last Sunday. I liked his last words: "It is very hard to live by faith in the unseen: I only know one thing harder—to live without it." Have you seen Arthur Lillie's book *Popular Life of Buddha,* with an answer to Rhys David's Hibbert Lectures on Buddhism? It is a good book, but written in superlatives and italics. I have shirked chapel for two days running now: a flagrant enormity in my eyes, but not in Ridding's. He asked me sarcastically this morning if I thought Nirvana

was the same as lying in bed. I told him it was very like it, only more so. He remarked that my definition of Nirvana was as lucid as most people's, but that that was not saying much.

To A.

College,
November 17, 1883.

I hasten to dispel any illusion on your part as to my opinion on the subject of your melancholy as distinct from Mrs. D's. I don't consider you so, because I understand more of your internal state; but people who know nothing of any mental or spiritual process of change in you, may very naturally take its external manifestations to be a kind of melancholy gloom. William Morris's lecture, as reported by the papers, struck me as very good: but neither he nor Ruskin, though I almost worship them both, seems to me practical in any sense. I harangued Debating Society on the subject of Capital Punishment last Tuesday. All my eloquence only obtained four votes as against fifteen: but several Dons expressed to me their regret at not having votes, as they would have given them for me. Next Thursday I defend belief in disembodied spirits: I really must enlighten the House a little on the subject. I am writing this from Sick House, where I am nourishing a youth sublime, i.e., a sore

throat, with a view to being able to read at the Shakespeare Reading to-night! Have you seen the last "Trusty Servant"? The criticisms on the Society have driven Mr. Hawkins frantic: he harangued the Society last night for half an hour, went to the Doctor to get it sconced officially, sympathized with me over "that disgustingly unjust piece of impertinent criticism" which concerned me—in short, he is out of his senses on the subject. Do you know Lewis Morris at all? If not do read his new book *Songs Unsung*, and peruse a poem called "The New Creed." Did I ever tell you a strange kind of dream I had a few months ago? I was sleeping quietly when I felt a shock go right through me, and I seemed to have left my body behind, and gone off to the stars; I saw myriads of lights streaming over and on a vast white lake: I was in a state of perfect ecstasy, when I felt myself whirled back to my body, and woke up with a violent sense of splitting headache. I at once got up while the impression was fresh and vivid, and wrote down an exact record of my impressions in a poem: it is now somewhat unintelligible, but absolutely accurate as a faithful record of immense sensations and influences. I have never experienced anything like it before or since. I have no time to copy it out legibly, but send it to you as it was written. The other poems are not to the point.

A DREAM.

One night far up amongst the white stars dreaming
I knew my soul wafted away from me,
To where a clear coruscant light was gleaming
And shot forth rays across a stilly sea.

The air was laden with a chilling numbness
And then my soul felt sudden iron hands
Strike through her utterance a thrill of dumbness
And gird her round with thwarting steely bands.

She moved not, neither knew the fateful region
Only the glare of white eye-dazzling rays,
Only the blue, dark sea, and many a legion
Of fluttering stars and spirits of unknown days.

These only marked she and with timid wonder
Gazed upon hosts of alternating light;
And ever and anon the scene asunder
Was cleft by radiance of higher might.

Faint with much straining of her eyes, she inward
Turned them, and in her secret self she mused,
Whether she now were feebly staring sinward
And her true seeing ruthlessly abused.

Or if to glories of the highest heaven
These fitful blinding darts guided the way;
And iron bands for strengthening staves were given
And she were gazing in the sunward day.

While thus she mused, she felt a stirring motion
Of tossing surges, and of restless seas;
And turning toward the sound, the purple ocean
She saw besprinkled with pale phantasies.

And to her eyes their form was as of strangers
That know not where to turn nor how to rest,
And hover listlessly o'er quaking dangers
And fain would sleep upon a serpent's breast.

Then as she downward gazed upon them lying,
Around her flowed a sea of shimmering light
And countless images she saw, all flying
Down to the waves with headlong wings of flight.

And as they touched the waters, straight a terror
Of frantic billows rose, and clashing tides,
And currents seethed in multitudinous error,
And all was noise, where nought of rest abides.

No more she knew, but when her aching senses
Once more were quickened then in wondering wise
She felt herself a part of piercing lenses
Through which all things were seen by fearful eyes.

A weird expansion felt she of her nature,
Whereby she shared in all the world around
And she became a part of every creature
And was transfused in every sight and sound.

Yet still she hung aloft in starry places
And felt the floods of light upon her life;
But of the sea were gone all heaving traces,
And only light clove light in dazzling strife.

White stars marched on and on in high procession,
And æons came with steps of stately feet;
And in the heavenly arc was no transgression,
And moons still rose and sank, still silver sweet.

79660

Only a quickening current stirred the spirit
Of life, and self died from the range of things,
A brother's love was each man's to inherit,
And soul met soul with other seeking wings.

The vision fled before my eyelids waking
And to the glare succeeded blinding night
As back to earth her way my soul was taking
And the sun rose upon the face of night.

I care not greatly for the stress of anguish
But ah! that I might pierce the veil that shrouds
The unseen world, that I no more might languish
With eyes that ache to cleave the heavy clouds.

Thus once I cried but now I cry no longer,
To send my soul to realms of eterne light,
Heaven's rays than my poor soul are ever stronger,
And heavenly stars too strong for my poor sight.

July 1883.

To A.

College,
November 20, 1883.

I wrote that somewhat illucid poem just when I was under the spell of having discovered in "St. Paul" a new metre: I have used it largely since then, but it is rather artificial.

I have performed a heroic act: I yesterday spent an hour in arranging my papers: and I burnt my earliest extant productions: they were twenty sonnets written in October last year: so that my present MSS. are the poetical

fruits of this year only: they amount to about one hundred close written sheets of long paper. I wrote a beautiful sonnet descriptive of my emotions on seeing my offspring burning, which consoles me for their loss: they are certainly too immature to deserve life.

By the way, I must renounce all claim to many of the absurd statements on Capital Punishment attributed to me: they are purely T.'s invention. T. is the kind of clever man I hate: very clever and even brilliant, but incredibly superficial and showy: he will make a shrewd party politician or magazine writer. I rather disagree with you as to St. Paul's character: I take him to be an intensely mystical enthusiast: a kind of early Ignatius Loyola or General Booth: very practical and hard-working, but still passionately mystic and introspective, with a taste for dogmatic theology: I don't see that Myers really presents him as contemplative. I know the essay on Renan well; it was Benson's favourite of the series. I have lately been writing sonnets on Buddha; not of any value, except as real expressions of personal feeling. Gladstone was very good in a simple way down here; spoke a few kind words very earnestly: it does one good to hear the man speak: he impresses me with such a sense of reverence. I had heard of Jowett's caligraphy; it looks characteristic of the man.

To A.

College,
November 25, 1883.

I have not destroyed all my MSS.: only my early sonnets, about twenty: I have still a formidable quantity of lyrics and sonnets, with longer poems. I succeeded in mystifying the House completely on the subject of Spirits: I am rather looking forward to the report of what I did not say in the *Wykehamist*: all the same, ghosts do exist, by 18 to 5! rather a practical triumph for them. I hardly know why, but I do feel lazy: however, the Doctor complimented me effusively on my remarks on Roman Literature, which speaks greatly for my imaginative powers. I don't envy you your exams.: scholarship is a delusion: "culture" is the real thing.

At one period of my life I called myself a Swedenborgian, very few people know how wonderfully great a man he was. Is there any truth in the statement as to Alexandria and the sacred books: if so, why could not the Buddhists have altogether exerted their powers over the fire? Perhaps the reason was political. Who is the author of the pamphlet, or rather the answer to the Swedenborgian? he is severe upon poor Olcott for his Americanisms. I wish you joy of your interview with a real live Buddhist.

To A.

November 30, 1883.

Your letter reads to me just like an extract from my own remarks on ghosts: I mean as to belief being not capable of intellectual demonstration to unbelievers, being in itself an intuition. I certainly hold that many people are unconscious Buddhists, who would reject with laughter the definite dogmas of Esoteric Buddhism: so that it is very necessary not to bring forward too prominently the externals of the esoteric doctrines; i.e., not to lay much stress on the Brotherhood, or so-called supernatural powers, but rather on the personal morality of the doctrine: at least, so I have found down here when trying to explain things to a few people who have accidentally seen any of your pamphlets. I have been thinking a good deal lately about a systematic study of Oriental languages: but I have no natural gift for languages, and am rather despairing. I have lately taken to reading the Bible as pure literature: Isaiah is very like Aeschylus. I am now in the agony of exam., or rather of preparation for it, so have little time to spare: I congratulate you on your success. Did you read in the papers the account of these Siamese proceedings and ceremonies? It struck me as significant that the King of Siam's Envoy, his

brother, and the Minister in addressing Siamese students over here, said that their only hope of succeeding was in keeping the Buddhist religion pure. It sounded encouraging to me, coming from highly civilized Orientals. I wish I had more time here at my own disposal: at present I find classical drudgery very exacting, when I want to think quietly. We have a Confirmation to-morrow: significant institution utterly perverted. Read St. John's Gospel carefully: it is very beautiful and instructive, and comes from an intensely spiritualized man. Swedenborg is a simply mesmeric force to some people: he exercises a most wonderful fascination: I know two ladies who worship him, literally, thinking him an incarnation of Deity: an unorthodox doctrine for Swedenborgians. Max Müller never seems to be an attractive man from his books: he will make out everything to be a solar myth, and destroys all the poetry of classical and Scandinavian tradition. I am glad that you have come round to reasonable views on Vivisection, but Gautama gives a higher ground than yours:

> Kill not—for Pity's sake: and lest ye slay
> The meanest thing upon its upward way.

Pity, you see, comes first: and remember, too, his words about sacrifice and animal slaughter generally. I wish Burdon Sanderson was at

the bottom of the sea—anywhere rather than in Oxford.

I do think that great things might be done at Oxford, with patience: if an exposition of the pure ethics of the system fails, then let men believe "for the very works' sake," but to get any belief at all implies a gradual ascent in belief, irresistibly. Could not a Society of some kind be formed there under the superintendence of the Theosophical Society? it would not bring forward sacred things, of course, prominently, but simply offer anyone a chance of examining the truth of Buddhism if only from an intellectual point of view: even that does some good by exposing the weakness of intellect. But perhaps individual work is more effective for the present; and even commonplace undergrads. have more earth lives than Christianity offers them. Excuse writing; am in the middle of Chorus of Agamemnon: the third Chorus is Hellenically presented Buddhism. Aeschylus was inspired.

To A.

WINDSOR FOREST,
December 20, 1883.

Your letter is a very natural one in many ways: I know so well by personal experience, though you might not think it, how hard the struggle after spirituality is. I often, even now,

feel that my aspirations are not enough of a reality to have a permanent influence: I know their truth and grandeur, in the abstract, and all the while find myself drifting along at pleasure: almost content to have it so. No, I don't think that either you or I deliberately live the lower life: I think that this anguish of remorse which I feel as well as you, for you have not known me long, is only the result of true attempts to live the higher: if you were really living entirely basely, you would soon renounce the ideal. As soon as we attain and realize our ideals, and we think we are successful, then, Browning teaches, we have really failed, because the essence of an ideal is that it should not be a thing capable of being realized to the full, but only an aim placed above our reach only to be *won* by *endless* striving. Every sin, every unspiritual thought, is an awful cause of consequences; but the feeling of remorse is the beginning of higher things.

I could go on for ever in this way, but I have said enough. My personal feelings are to some extent those of anger with myself for my blindness: I have always been trying to find a philosophy of soul and sense which should unite the two, the result always being the subjection of the former: now, of course, I see how utterly mistaken I was, and how infinitely harder I have made it to break the ties of the latter and free my spirit altogether. I don't think we are

conceited: people often say I am: I always analyse my feelings, and I have resolved the conceit, not, I hope, conceitedly, into self-consciousness and impatience trying to hide themselves. And if I appear conceited to others, God knows I know my own littleness too well. I feel rather ill just now: I walked ten miles last night in the Forest at midnight to clear my brain, and am very tired. I don't think I shall be in town for any time just now. I think if it is not in your way I should prefer your keeping Mallock till I go back to Winchester. Luke=Matthew Arnold, a perfect portrait in every way. You must have heard of Professor Clifford, an intensely brilliant young mathematician at Oxford who used to write whole libraries in a superior Bradlaughite style: he was a friend of your father, I know, and wonderfully fascinating and enthusiastic: his early death was a frightful loss to literature and philosophy: he was the very antithesis to our beliefs, and worshipped intellect and reason. I got here yesterday to find my people at Mass, and they are all at Church now. It is so strange to live in a world of intense faith! there is something so grand in the idea of limitless faith in the unseen, and distrust in the seen and the reasoned. I have great fear for our religion all the same. The number of people who profess Buddhism astonishes me, when I consider that so few try and live up to their professions.

But still truth must prevail in the end. I think the frame of mind in which people commit suicide is one which is to be cultivated: I mean that longing to have done with the things of the world, and precipitate oneself into the illimitable vacancy of death, for then we can really rise above the desire for death by dying, as Paul says, daily in the flesh. Of course the flesh resists, is meant to resist by its nature: of course we must sometimes fall, and keep the memory of the fall: but yet, as I have said, the state of remorse is a higher state. And it is possible to overestimate the extent of the past fall and disgrace: it is often wise to leave the past to itself and yearn forwards into the future. For every act of unspirituality —the best word, being negative, as all sin is —let an act of spiritual intention, if not attainment, be set as atonement. The light is not given to throw its rays into the past night: it brightens the dawn and continues to rise until it reach the zenith: it sinks, in nature, but not in the supernatural. So we need not really despair because of accusing memories: rather let us leave them alone, and create fresh ones.

To A.

WINDSOR FOREST,
December 30, 1883.

Excuse my long silence, especially as it is only broken now by a preface to a longer. My father, acting on letters from the Doctor, has forbidden me to correspond with you, and requests you to abstain from writing to me. The people at Winchester have no real knowledge of our thoughts, and insist upon the "unhealthiness" of such religious discussion. Well, of course, at home I can't thoroughly explain myself, and so I can only submit in silence. Don't suppose that our friendship is in any way broken though it is thwarted by others with good intentions. You see my father simply talks of Theosophists as a "pack of idiotic fools," and thinks our having views of our own sheer nonsense. I do not attempt to argue the point. It will not really hurt us, perhaps only strengthen us. I think I shall really care for the things of the body more, as you advise, and make up for want of religious sympathy by practical wisdom in the way of exercise. "Excuse these wild and wandering thoughts," but I am in a hurry and rather ill. My faith will perhaps be soon tested. The Doctor says: "I think there is something in you, and that something may come of all your mental

anxieties, but it is not an edifying sight for the School, so be quick about it." That is the state of the case, so farewell till—Nirvana, as far as I can see!

The boy's parents were very narrow-minded and prejudiced Anglicans, to whom Buddha was apparently indistinguishable from anti-Christ. Hence the prohibition, which it will be noticed is withdrawn later, with as little reason. The next letter is to another mutual friend.

To B.

College,
February 8, 1884.

Thank you: that is the most expressive phrase that my mind in its present state of bewilderment can suggest. I think that this state of separation and isolation that is forced upon me makes me very egotistical: I feel as if I could only write or think of my own wretched self, whereas the less I think at all the better it will be eventually. I am not coherent, but it is inevitable. You are no stranger to me if anything of similarity of thought can, as it must, do away with the want of conventional acquaintance.

Again, I thank you: it is indeed cheering to feel that the world is very large and any given

society in it very minute: I find a comfort in a kind of vague recognition of the numberless dead and the many living who are our spiritual brothers. I do not think I am violating any promise or understanding between myself and my immediate superiors in writing to you: thought and intuition are unfettered except by ourselves, and I am but thinking and pondering to others instead of to myself. Give A. my love; I know what he must feel about our state, and how real a test of sincerity it is. Tell him to read Browning's "Paracelsus": I have just now bathed myself in its living waters, and feel that the truth is very true, and that many failures only mean that it is worth the struggle. But I will not, even in word, seem to break my promise: I will only think to myself of him, and wait. Strange the link that sympathy is to what the world calls "strangers"! I know very little of you, as you of me: but I have no hesitation in feeling that we are not strangers.

Yes, I think I can claim pity, but then these things are but "mortalia," and the light of truth is deathless, even to the wiping away of kindly tears. I find, now, most pleasure of spirit in mere daily life, the "common round" which Christianity fails so piteously to imbue with the spirit of Christ: in poor efforts at higher life of action, a change from passive arrest of thought to truer activity of life prompted

by thought. Ah, the treasures of natures, the untold richness of literature, which I discover *now*, in before unguessed profusion! Perhaps it is in this expansion of the intellectual enjoyment together with absolute suppression of intellectual pride that the Truth has its chiefest glory.

Pardon me these mere effusions of egotism; you cannot conceive the happiness of expressing the heart's real thought, of getting it away, so to speak, of really feeling the ecstasy of truth. Tell A., if you will, that I am never forgetful of his having been the chosen minister to me of the truth, that I am really with him in spirit. Again I thank you for your kindness.

To B.

College,
February 11, 1884.

I have received, read, and appreciated the *Leaflet*: I would rather not appear insincere by criticising your share in it, so will only ask you who wrote a little poem you do not claim, but which has wonderfully impressed me—though more by what it suggests than expresses—I mean the song with the burden, "Ah, me! the journey is long"? I think the paper a decided step in the right direction, though a little discursive in scope. But I proceed to

your letter. I knew you would quarrel with me for placing sympathy amongst the things that perish: perhaps my point of view is too exclusively individual for others to recognize: I have always thought that personal affection and mere affinity of taste are too much, if I may talk Browning, of successes not to be failures and evidences of shortcomings: I have always yearned to be able to greet all men as my brothers instinctively, not by accident of "juxtaposition," but, none the less, I do see in love of such a limited kind enough evidence of dissatisfaction with itself to warrant my regarding it as a reaching upward, an attempt at supplying the frame with a picture, completing the incompleteness of things.

I am not altogether sorry at being unable to read Buddhist literature: I feel a kind of repulsion towards the mere knowledge of which they seem so proud, not because it is a help towards revealing spiritual truth, but simply as elevating them above "Western scientists." Surely truth is not absolute in form as well as in essence? Surely Swedenborg and the mediæval German mystics are as really in possession of spiritual truth adapted to their needs as are the Oriental adepts of the truth in its more impressive, because less questioned hitherto, form? All men do reach the absolute truth some time: all men are "saved" or "lost," though æons hence: that, at least, we

owe as a fact capable of demonstration to the East; so that if I, as a Western, living amongst Western people, subject to local limitations of custom and possibility, do none the less dimly apprehend and earnestly strive after the light which lighteth every man coming into the world, then I claim to be living the highest life possible for me and such as I, though God knows painfully falling short of the highest ideal.

Oh, that I knew what my lot in life is to be! if only I might even guess at myself, as I shall go into the grave! I am very much in need of counsel, through unfortunate misconceptions of my real feelings, not only by the authorities here, but utterly and entirely by my home people, to whom I am simply unable to explain anything. I have no prospects of any material kind; I could not bear sustained mechanical work, and literature, to which I aspire, is too sacred. It is unnecessary for me to state that the "poetry" I have perpetrated since September 1882 is enough to fill volumes. But I never feel that I can really *do* anything; poetry is being, is the projection of self into the wide spaces of unfilled imagination; I have no right to live by living, I believe in Carlyle (whom do not misapprehend as anything else but a loving, tender fellow-man, very earnest and suffering), and, believing in his words, refuse to be, to the external world,

other than an inarticulate poet. I feel, as all must feel who believe in spirituality, an intense love of beauty in all its forms: I realize to myself an infinity of love in listening to true music, in seeing true paintings, reading true poetry; but, in the midst of all this delight, I feel an impatient longing to crash discords into the music, to burn and destroy the poetry and painting with their memories, to be up and doing or suffering; the kind of state which goads men into the cloister or the gaming hell. Egoism, mere egoism, to waste your time in ravings: but I can't help it or myself. And nothing seems to give me any assistance; I try and find value in C. Kingsley, but find instead explanations of the Athanasian Creed; in Maurice, and he preaches of "the eternal scheme of Redemption." I know that those who, like myself, feel this want of actuality, will have it supplied: I believe in the approach of a veritable Armageddon, an upheaval of the nations, wherein all true men must take their share as men and spirits. But I leave these matters and turn elsewhere. I am rejoiced to hail in you a fellow Browningite. I adore Browning with an ecstasy well nigh passionate. I know that the feeling must appear extravagant, but I know also that it is sincere. Do make A. love him; I know how infinitely he would find comfort in him, if only he would read him as he would an evangel of light.

I am agitating to found a literary society down here in the school; but we are very prosaic, and I meet with little response, but hope to effect something by articles in our papers.

If you write again do not, more than is essential, introduce Buddhism as a topic: I know that such promises as I have made to my father and the masters here on the subject are mere evasions on both sides; but I am bound to respect them. I will certainly send you and A. photos when I have them, at present I have not any.

Does it ever strike you that the nothingness of Death is absolute? that, as there is no beginning of unknowable infinity, so there is no end to the boundless advance of time and time-caused change? Perhaps it is a truism, but it always strikes me when I think of it as a newly revealed truth. I have been reading Comte and Mill together just now; such an absolute death in life as their respective philosophies I can scarcely realize: and then, the piteous certainty that they are both so hopelessly incapable of reaching the truth, whose beams are but behind the thin veil of materialism yet remaining. Comte's hierarchy of noble men is so grand a conception, but such a petrification of the truth that "all things, yea, all men and holy angels, are fragments broken off from that high and central well of light, whose dart-

ing rays do, by their streaming gold, commute the base things of earth into the liquid purity of most tender heaven." A strange sentence, is it not? and, I venture to say, unknown to all the world but myself, being a MS. remark I found in an old edition, unfortunately lost, of the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

I have now only to excuse myself for my Wintonian prolixity.

To B.

College,
February 18, 1884.

And is George Eliot's aspiration really the creed of mankind; does the "choir invisible" really live only in "memory of perfect deed"? I do not want reason: I do not want argument: I want more light. Ah, I *know* the truth, I am inspired, I go about my daily trivialities with the words of the Most High on my closed lips and in my heart "breaking for a little love." I care nothing for all the vast seething darkness of the past life of æons, or the white blankness of future light: I am in the present, and know all I *need*. In plainer words, apart from all manifestations of the infinite and unknowable in the creeds of church and school, I am an Idealist, Spiritualist, Transcendentalist. Yet, spite of the glory of intuition, the calm dignity of spiritual life is unknown

to me: and sometimes I am ready to think that the spirit of light is the devil of orthodoxy, driving me down to the orthodox hell by the weapon of my self-conceit. Ah, is Christ God? or is Frederic Harrison? or am I truly the only God allowed to myself? I will accept any of them, if only I can live by him. But to one who, like myself, believes that he has the truth in inspiration, personal, uncommunicable truth, it is very hard to be unable to use it, to feel himself "a temple of the Holy Ghost," yet see in himself no signs of sacrifice. Think for a moment of what we are: the awful mass of creeds and nations and histories piled up behind us, and we, feeling ourselves urged on wildly by the force of inconceivable law into a future of haze and doubt. Suicide is a painfully logical act; were it not that I instinctively recoil from logic, I might grow afraid of it. I think you are right in what you say as to individuality: I can find in my art, if I may so call it, the most intense comfort. But I will talk on other topics awhile.

I suppose you know C. at Rugby. I wrote a few days ago at random to the Editor of the *Leaflet*,* thinking that an expression of extraneous sympathy and appreciation might not

* The *Leaflet* was a short-lived Rugby school paper, a sort of carrying on on more literary lines of the T.V.W., and C., with whom there is subsequent correspondence, was at that time its Editor.

be regarded as an intrusion : and I have received a most kind letter from him, recognizing my motives, deploring the lack of material and support at Rugby, and winding up by an appeal to me for contributions ; so I have sent him a certain number of lyrics and short poems for him to do what he likes with any time. The mysterious fascination of poetry is wonderful : to throw oneself out of oneself into one's inner self seems, and is, absolutely a passion with me.

You say that to know that I *am* here ought to suffice me, but it does not suffice me ; and how can it ? if " between two worlds life pours like a star " how can I guide my feeble flickerings unless I know their origin and their true use ? I know neither : only " that it is from God to God." But that is not enough : my master, Carlyle, lived through eighty heroic years of inconceivable suffering before he went to God : and his star was livid as a corpse-light, in ignorance of truth of spirit. You may say that these powers unfold themselves, that I shall find my destined path the same as the one I take by chance. I think not : I think that when I am dying, without the rapturous hope of orthodoxy, of " being with Jesus," without the firm faith of the East, of an earth-life ended, a period of probation over, without the trust of absolute extinction which Schopenhauer would give me : without the high thought

of a great example and worth to humanity which George Eliot and Comte died with—without any of these I shall leave the world, leave the earthly light, and depart, with one thought only: the thought of a life wasted. Here, however, I am not all destitute of hope: for the intuition of the spirit, the breath wafted from the land of dreams and shades, the faces of dead friends, these I know are realities: I have a faith in the unseen in the place of death. I will try to tell you a little of what I mean: you may understand.

I have often gone into churchyards, and even, when possible, vaults and charnel-houses, to try and hear the truth from the lips of spirits, to force the paraphernalia of death to unfold their secret: I have tried, oh, so earnestly tried, in utter faith to make the dead hear me, feel for me, comfort me. But the dead are deaf, or else too happy to listen. Don't think me mad: I am only human. You see, I *know* that there is a truth somewhere: I *will not accept it as a creed* of churches or philosophies. I will find it for myself out of myself: I believe in love as the key to unlock the spheres. Meanwhile, I must live a lonely life: life of art and patience: life of sympathy and self-reliance: but, above all, a life of unseen relations, of spiritual (call them chimerical) visions and intuition. I would not waste my strength in solving questions of my own propounding, but the

wind, the air, dreams, all bring me questions and keep on waiting for answers.

Don't think I am not giving your letter enough thought: but I must write at once, before I lose my impressions.

Ridding's * leaving is an inconsolable grief to me: he is the only person here who (I am not speaking conceitedly) understands me at all.

To B.

College,
February 23, 1884.

I *do* know Shelley: and I know only too well "the wide, grey, lampless, deep, unpeopled world"—perhaps you know the rest; I think it is true. You say that I have not answered your letter: I say you have not answered mine. I grant you that I cannot *attain to* my perfect ideal: I do not wish to do so: I want to find out its existence outside my imagination, and then aspire "immer und immer nach zu streben." I am afraid that what A. says is true of me: I do not put my heart into my actions: I am selfish towards those who are not objects of personal love on my part. Paracelsus failed through want of love: I will fail with him rather than counterfeit God. Do not

* Dr. Ridding was Headmaster of Winchester at this time, and left to become Bishop of Southwell.

think that I really have no love: I have too much to find a resting place for it, except in an ideal. I know how horrible this must sound —this indifference to my wretched brothers in this painfully real world, and this star- or God-gazing into the infinite: but I must and can only repeat I do feel these yearnings, and they are I. I can die, and find the truth: but I cannot kill them, and live; they are immortal, whilst I am a being.

Yes, there is good in everything: I am too true a Browningite, and I know by heart "Caliban upon Setebos" and much of "Christmas Eve and Easter Day." You tell me to love and to love "humanity": what, I ask with Victor Hugo, is "humanity"? I, too, am part of that abstraction: and I, *as human*, know my weakness and will not be content to lean upon my brothers, to comfort them in return: pardon me if I grieve you, but I say that "humanity" is a sham, a mass of suffering; and you bid us exchange each other's loves and be content.

Who gave me my longings? God, I mean the Unknowable, knows they are not of my seeking; I find them in me, as did Plato; but I do not argue back with him and Wordsworth: I prophesy forward into the future. Do not ask me to be logical, to dispute points, to answer you: "Video meliora, proboque: Deteriora sequor": there is my answer, as you would put it into my mouth; not that

I see better things: I see realities, and follow shadows. I, as Beddoes says, "with half my soul inhabit other worlds." By nature I am painfully exclusive and unprepossessing, I feel myself born too late: I ought to have been an Alchemist, and have searched, alone, for the Elixir of Life, and died on the brink of finding it.

Ah, is not all life a looking for the Elixir? then perhaps Death is the well of life? then I can look forward for Death.

Is not the world a real thing; I mean real in essence? then there must be its counterpart in man: I see the leaves rotting in autumn: I see my friends die: I see spring come: I feel my friends live still. That is my nearest approach to a formula. You do but take upon you the executioner's disguise which Schopenhauer invented, and scent it free with perfumes from the taint of blood, and put the blossom of love in its button-hole, and ask me to wear it. I will not: I appeal to Schopenhauer's two tests or images—Nature, Music.

When I see the world, "the sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains," I see life dying and quickened, ever changing and growing up, species evolved from species, air, and light, and growth. When I listen, as I am listening as I write, to the glorious notes of an organ, I hear what Abt Volger heard: a pledge of immortality. I find no death in

life. I turn to man, and have hope: but not certainty. I find in this an evident truth: all being for the best, certainty is undesirable: then I must have faith. But faith, to be faith, cannot rest in itself: so, with you I will love, or try to love: with my own spirit I will aspire, away, far away, and find out the author of my faith. And, ah, you tell me that I am but looking for myself.

Don't misunderstand me: I will not write a Gospel, or be even as Swedenborg, or write an autobiography of my Spirit: I will, despite love trying to shelter materialism, I will aspire to the Unseen. My companions here would say, "Moonshine": you say, "You are seeking a Will o' the Wisp." Well, I am: I confess it: I am crying for the moon, and am stumbling thro' marshes after a Will o' the Wisp: but are not Moons and Wisps realities? They elude us, or placidly look down upon us, but they exist, and bid us seek them; I do but obey their call, I do not invent it.

I am only repeating myself: I will try to formulate my letter: "I am willing to grant that you are right in all but one point," i.e., "that I am of my own will seeking shadows: I am called to follow them, and cannot stop by the way to be a good Samaritan."

I can say nothing but just that, call me insensible, inhuman, self-deluded, I will not defend myself.

I know that the gods of ages have gone away: I know that change is the condition of existence: I do not know that the heavens are empty spaces, save for the Light of Love. I fill them up with spirits.

I have not heard from my father just lately: but I thank you though I know the result. He cannot understand what I feel, and I cannot explain and dissect my soul.

I cannot—no, I can, but am too tired—write any more.

Thank A.; I know what he is feeling about me. I may be too scrupulous, but I had rather not hear from him as long as I have pledged myself to solitude.

With thanks and melancholy.

23rd.

I did not send this yesterday, so add a few words.

If you really wish in any way to assist me, explain to me how your gospel differs from a refined and—permit the paradox—loving Stoicism. You will not look forward or back: you simply do your obvious duty, and love your brothers: very well, but is that all? You must feel that you cannot exist in uncertainty: at least, I cannot understand your enduring it. I cannot understand George Eliot's life, as you seem to do. Read, if you can, Howell's *Undiscovered Country*, and in Myers' *Essays*,

Modern, the confessions of faith of George Sand and Mazzini, especially the latter. Vale!

To B.

College,
March 1, 1884.

I am at this moment radiantly happy at the discovery of a new form of verse, a virtuoso bliss, which is to me exquisite: so I take opportunity to write.

I have nothing to tell you: the sun is bright and, which is better, warm: the sky is blue, and a bird is twittering somewhere. I feel as happy as I can allow myself to be. Also, I have just read Fred. Harrison's *Ghost of Religion* in the *Nineteenth Century*: it completely squashes the vapid Agnostic and the vague Churchman, and gives us "Humanity" as the only genuine article; well, there I part company, and ally myself with the primeval savage who "deduced God from ghosts," but I won't dispute anything with anybody.

Strange what a difference a glorious day can make! How one revels in life, in being, in poetry, in the holy ridiculousness of things! As to your and A.'s coming down here—I am awkwardly situated. As to you, I have no hesitation: to the eyes of authority you are a harmless person, and a friend of mine; but

A. is a *bête noire*, and the people here would expect us to preach or hold meetings or something: seriously, I don't know about him: morally, of course, he can come: but practically, I am uncertain. Yes! you shall come, both of you! it is absurd to suppose that two respectable individuals are to be debarred from going about by the quakings of orthodox consciences. But, if it would suit you, come earlier: the Sixth, by some blessed arrangement, have no exams. to speak of this half, so that by Thursday, at least, I should be absolutely dying of ennui, which is the worst death. I am glad my father answered you: I can imagine what he said: very earnest, but, if I may say so, wrongheaded.

What are you going to do in life? I have no prospects, material or otherwise: perhaps literature will swallow me up, as many scribblers before. I *do* hate, as A. hates, scholarship in the technical sense. I won't be a pedant, and I won't learn philology or occupy myself with "theories of the middle verb"; I love classic literature and scholarship so far as it elucidates that, but I am not in the world to dissect or vivisect. Which word, as I am in a discursive mood, reminds me of a question, which answer: Do you hate and abhor vivisection, even under anæsthetics, as the incarnate manifestation of atheism and uncleanness? You must, but I know A. is a heretic: convert him.

So you have renounced Chapel services? I can't sympathize: I love all services from Roman Catholic down to Little Bethel: they are like reading poetry in their effects of laughter and tears. In any case I never feel a repugnance.

"What's the best thing in the world? Something out of it, I think." Mrs. Browning's words are my creed: but how I get the "something" into the world? I can get myself out, but I can't take my brothers: your Humanity steps in: we are not opposed, really.

I suppose you find that you vary with the weather? I mean, your creed has a kind of barometer, as the influences change. Just now I feel all love—so I am going to walk away down the river this afternoon and read Emerson: my idea of love finding partial expression. Yes, do come, both, and don't hesitate: you see my father could not object to that: he is too rational.

Oh, life is so good, and men are so wretched! And I am so happy because of the sunshine! There is a logical connection! Vale! No, χαίρε!

Excuse writing. I hope you are getting used to it. Anyhow it may act as a thorn in the flesh.

To B.

College,
March 22, 1884.

On going out of doors this morning for the first time for a week, having been in bed with abominable influenza, I was comforted by two good things—your handwriting and a glorious spring day: I read the one whilst walking far away in the other: as to prayer and worship —well, I did both whenever I looked about me: I mean the feeling of joy and hope and (pardon the expression) immortality, is prayer: for as I did not give myself these glories of nature, nor deserve them, I must be grateful: whether to the daisies and primroses, or a reflex of myself in Heaven, I neither know nor care: I don't worship God: I worship myself sometimes: and always I worship looking back. I am not lucid just now, but I may be intelligible. As to Winchester, Saturday would be in every way suitable for every one if, as you say, it suits you. If this weather holds out the place ought to look a Paradise: but I always idealize places I love so intensely as I do Winchester.

Poor C.! I know I told him I should be illegible: but it doesn't matter to him, or me either, except in the matter of personal correspondence. Why will you run down Rugby so unfilially? it can't be more Philistian than

this place is—and it is not obscure though it is Midland, which you seem to regard as a crime. I couldn't start periodicals in a literary way here: we are all very materialistic, and social, and political, and would rather ape the Spectator with a flavour of the World. To my disgust advantage was taken of my illness to elect me literary Editor of the productions of the Shakespeare Society, in company with three others, all of New: it means endless correspondence, and printers suicidal.

It is not irrational to pray: don't you see that we are very weak, and circumstances very strong, and no communication between the two? ergo, pray: not that your prayer is heard by anyone or thing: but it is a comfort, just as music is. I almost think true lives impossible without a kind of ceremonial creed: I agree with Newton Hall there. No more time.

To B.

WINDSOR FOREST,
March 27, 1884.

I got your absurd letter this morning, and write a few lines in answer. First of all, my thanks for your roses, which I spiritually devoured. Next, as to your visit. I know perfectly that I myself was unable to appreciate it as I might have, thro' my deafness—but as

to its being an intrusion—well, that's nonsense entirely.

Why did I go to Church this morning to listen to dirge-like litanies with intervals for mediation? Why didn't I go into the fields and enjoy the primroses and spring? And why is Jesus's death insisted on, and his life ignored? Ah well, it is all mournfully amusing, and amusement is a holy thing. I hardly know what is the reason of my absurd delight in theology, so called: just now I am absorbing *Tracts for the Times*, most attractive in many ways. It seems so strange that we know nothing of death, and everything about eternity.

I made an era in my life in saying goodbye to Dr. Ridding on Tuesday: I feel so by myself now, and with such a strange sensation of superiority and conceit! isn't it so?

What is Sin, in itself? I want you to give me a definition of your idea of it.

I envy you Trinity College, Cambridge: it is exactly what Coleridge called architecture —"frozen music."

With regard to myself, it is a satisfaction to me to know that I shall not be deaf all my life: tho' I often wish I could be deaf and blind, and live inwardly!

I write in haste and disconnectedly, pardon it.

I have got your other lost letter from Wolverhampton.

The line you ask about is an original hexa-

meter of Shelley's, written by him and signed in a visitor's book in an inn in the Alps: underneath some Christian has written, "The fool hath said, etc.": on which Swinburne remarks, "What the fool did write, the reader can judge." The line says little for Shelley's scholarship in point of spelling.

To C.

RHUAL,
April, 1884.

My apology and humble appeal for restoration into full communion with you once more I performed yesterday: and now I write in confidence and in trust. Since last I heard from you—how long that seems!—I have been intensely interested in life in many ways—and my philosophy, or systematic want of it, has received its final perfection in the few days lately lived at Oxford. Not the beautiful spell and associations—not the thought and idea of the holy and eternal city—rather the personal delight and fascination of contact with true life and true love: the sense of fellowship has seized hold upon me. By nature unfamiliar enough and unemotional, still the close intimacy of those I can feel for in common has been a dreamy revelation of happiness.

B.A.O.H. and two others whom you may know—these men are real in themselves to love

or to ignore: and the common union of these in showing me the love which I can never externally seem to appreciate and return is a divine thing and a solution of many fitful doubts and longings. Mere life, mere life, that is enough: not the thought alone, not the various work, not the pleasures alone: but the mere reality of common existence. That solves all the questions: is it possible to hate or be jealous, to teach or to injure, when I can reject no one and no thing? Brotherhood is God.

And you—are you able to look upon the world with calmness, or are you yet suffering in the body? Let me have some knowledge of you: don't distrust me: I have not seen you, but what of that when love is the daily heir and common son of all lives? Back at Winchester, beautiful with growing leaves and warm breath of April and promise of full summer perfection: yet even so, and amid the work of school life and the employments of my own personal life, there is a void and a vacant space: loneliness is a little lonely at times—and I am lonely here, so far as personal love is involved: pleasant friendship, interest—these I have, but I want more. O. and H. are very lovable: both utterly kind to me a stranger, and both with the sense of natural humour and natural laughter which preserves love from falling into distorted jealousy and selfishness. Ah, how unspeakably grateful I must be to you all,

you who without the pretext of friendship, go further and will make me happy in the warmth of your love—if that is not a dream, a passing thought borne in upon my loneliness. I can only write in this way: I want to sing, to be intoxicated in the light of life: I have lived, and might die in the truth of that. But now future fortunes and the cares of future responsibilities, all the burden of ignorant expectancy, fall away: I am alive, and strong with thought of that life. And all this from a few hours with a few human beings.

Write to me before very long, before my dream dies—before I am cold again and irresponsive and dull. At present I am happy. Myself shall be with you soon.

To B.

WINDSOR FOREST,
April 26, 1884.

So the world has given its verdict at last: the respectable, intelligent, appreciative world? Well, I am so heartily glad. But I will give you the best account of myself that I can. I will begin with two statements: I am a Browningite: I love the beautiful Quaker doctrine, "Love the sinner and condemn the sin." (Hardly that: depends on case.) You must assimilate these two things as real, active facts.

Then I do really believe that at the end all is right: I find myself in the world: I am confronted with thoughts, fashions, ways of life, fellow-men: whereas all I want is to live my own life. You can scarcely understand how intensely I live alone: how alien and strange and laughable everything appears to me but myself. As a child, I found one of my chief pleasures in secretly pulling to pieces the Bible, in unconsciously noticing everything about me with a kind of precociously artistic manner, as if I were a dramatist: the latter trait I retain.

I have been told by people who have been my friends that I am naturally, by birth, devoid of so-called conscience and moral instinct: I never really know when I am absolutely sincere in thought: but in tastes and actions I am perfectly consistent and sincere. Accordingly I live my own life, and not some other life.

I once in an essay for Ridding defined happiness as "the having full scope in one's own sphere and circle for practising that rule of life which practice and instinct have approved." Ridding looked at me with a smile and said, "You have come into the world too late for that." He stated appreciatively the case as it is. My happiness is of my own making: as I have told you I love music, I love flowers, I love literature, I love studying people: except in matters of taste, i.e., matters of culture, no

one can excite my loathing nor my indignation. After reading *Thomas à Kempis* I can listen with no disgust to sensual conversation: I can return freely to walk over the downs. As I love the simple nobility of the literature, the beautiful world of nature, so I can take pleasure in the thoughts and minds of other natures. Don't misunderstand me: I have not the pen of Browning to make a gulf of difference appear between shades of meaning.

I do not love sensuality: I do not hate it; I do not love purity: I do not hate it; I regard both as artistic aspects of life. "But," you will say, "in real earnest life you must take a side." True: and I ask myself how I ought to walk: I am answered in the words of a poetess, "Where thy own footsteps would be leading." When I am in town they lead to the National Gallery and the Albert Hall; when in my own room to turning poetaster; when I meet with a question of morals, to the question not "What does my conscience tell me I should do?" but, "By doing what, would your artistic instinct be satisfied? What does the moment tell you it requires for itself?" Show all this rhapsody to N. and he will say it's all nonsense, I am a sham, I am simply immoral and don't like confessing it in words so veil it with words. I know I have lost many friends by my life: I may be about to lose more: but (don't be disgusted) their very losses are to me no more

than incidents, from which to derive artistic pleasure: don't think me a heartless dilettante if I tell you that all this episode is to be intensely delightful: that I left off a quasi-Browningite versification of it to write to you. It is not that I am insincere now: I know my thoughts shift, but that is inevitable: my actions are true and sincere. I will, notwithstanding, come to details.

"I ought to have left the school." Required an answer. I ought not.

My way of life which I will never renounce, naturally logically, brings me very near to infringement of the world's—especially the school-world's—ten commandments. As a prefect, I will not take steps in the matter of "immorality": as a junior I never shrunk back from any society: I do not *now*. I will not call anything "sin": I deal neither in "poison nor pap": I am an "impressionist" in life. I openly told Ridding last half, in almost these words, my convictions—no, God's convictions in me—and he did understand me, in a way most lovingly gentle and sympathetic: he told me he did not expect me to be able to do two things: to keep myself (from my own point of view) unspotted from the world, and to have any friends in the world. The latter is quite true: painfully true sometimes: but the first I deny. In spite of all my mental state during the past year, I return to my oldest

station: I cannot violate my own nature. Asceticism is wrong as a rule of life, sensuality is wrong as a disorder of life: but asceticism is right when the moment cries out with Faust, "Entbehren sollst du"; and sensuality when it whispers, "eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

Ah, yes! I know what you must think of all this: how at variance you must think it with high nobility, with aspiration, with the respectability of the British Nation: I can't say more plainly what I think.

Perhaps you take up Jesus' attitude: "No one has a right to condemn you, but still you are damnable in the abstract, therefore, sin no more!" I have explained my answer to that.

Dear B., if you really cannot accept this, if you think I am a sham, at least it may be some comfort to you to know that no event in life can wound me: I am invulnerable. Do you know Walt Whitman?

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they see God." Can you evoke from my "apologia pro vita mea" that I see God?

Again forgive me for possible injuries.

Show this to anyone you like: I am indifferent either way.

To B.

WINDSOR FOREST,
April 30, 1884.

Thank you for your letter and its enclosure, which I return without having really had time to study it. My rough, crude impression is that its author was a poetical thinker, not a thinking poet. I mean his thoughts, true and very beautiful, occasionally suffer from monotony of presentment: without being a plagiarist or otherwise than original he might, I think, have infused a little more mannerism into his verse, viewed as an art-product: but I can sincerely admire it from many points of view to me less important.

Do I know Beddoes? and do I know Thomson? the questions seem so strange. Beddoes is an instance of simple Art, without the necessary foundation of natural instinct: his *Death's Jest Book* is a wonderful poem, but such a wonderful copy of the old models! but he is one of my favourites, though I have never been able to get hold of any of his works permanently.

Thomson I hear much of, since I knew a friend of his: and I know the story of his life, and love him for it. A poem which George Eliot loved is certainly noteworthy: but in this case the love is deserved: I never saw elsewhere such artistic pessimism. By the way,

who is the author of your lines? he has absorbed too much Shelley to be good for his poetry.

I know many Nichols by name, and can't distinguish yours or his book, though I know its name. I go to town to-morrow for Ridding's "consecration": as if he wanted it!

Convocation has almost relieved itself from the stigma of the Horton business by its note of yesterday: another good gift from the hands of High Churchmen.

I have no time just now—a fact my writing will tell you.

To B.

College,
May 4, 1884.

I scarcely understand you as a whole. I see quite distinctly and with clear insight the tendency of your last letter, but not the mind that directed it. You want, you will have, definitions of definitions: you say, do I recognize a morality, etc.? and, of course, as real things? Yes, they are real things to me: I maintain that I am (how I loathe the word!) "moral": moral in act and thought. But that is only my opinion. The beautiful Church of Rome, which I love and honour beyond all other institutions for God-manufacture, has strange morality: a priest told me last week that "the divine Christ should have been a

sinner: how else can God love, how else be God, unless by pardoning sin as an act of infinite logic?"

Do I acknowledge right and wrong? Oh no, how can I: am I eternal? I strive and struggle against ugliness, against the frightful pruriency which fills our streets with lost (!) women and our society with graceful debauchees: and I know neither wrong nor right, but I know that ugliness is the end of some things, and beauty and the beauty of holiness of others: don't you know the last lines of Browning's "Statue and the Bust"?

Is morality of any value? Yes, marketable and otherwise: it has saved souls and burned bodies, loved and hated, run the round of antithesis. In daily life it means, I think, reduced to common-sense, the combination of courtesy and self-respect. Small things, you think: not high and noble.

Byron and Shelley: Rome and Athens: wrong and right: I care more for your words on these men than any others of yours. Shelley's "spirituality" and Byron's passionate "sensualism"!

Did you ever read the *Revolt of Islam*? have you studied Shelley's life? do you know his letters? how does he define morality?

The truth is, that nothing is common or unclean: there is no sin and no devil.

Sensuality: what is it unless the expression

of the *mind* instead of the *spirit*? such a thing as the Excursion is to the Ode on Duty? lime-light instead of the Stars? it leads to ruin of body and grossness of spirit: alas, yes! but not till Morality has spurned it and trampled on it.

Do you know anything of Blake and his Gospel? if you really want to know my meaning, turn to him. I do not pretend to have found a new Gospel: I am only Christian enough and conceited enough at the age of seventeen to assert that I can assist the cause of the world by the gospel of universal love and pardon: I could kneel at the feet of all the "sins" and ask their blessing, because I do not know why and wherefore I should condemn them. Do not isolate parts of conduct: don't say "This man has been a thief, that man is honest: I will give tracts to the one and my blessing to the other," for, you see, you don't know very much outside yourself. My enthusiasm is as true as any man's; Humanity is a sham; but poor sinning men and women are no shams, and I will not condemn them or their sins; how do I know? I do love the cause of Love and Charity; the world does not.

Oh, think what a human soul is; think how it works within itself and is but itself, whilst you are quite other than it! Personify Sin if you will, you can't include all in the capital letter.

Milton perforce made the devil his hero. I picture-frame, it is true; but whereas some pictures are things to shudder at for their unspiritual imbecility of origin, others are not so, and I can judge accordingly: only, in the soul, all pictures are God's work. "Logic and sermons never convince; am I inconsistent? very well, I am inconsistent."

To B.

May, 1884.

With little better to do I write to you, hardly knowing why. I have felt so happily amused since Sunday, when the Second Master * preached a most excellent sermon, unconscious theosophy throughout: a masterpiece of priestly commonsense and spiritualism: a delightful incident.

Why do people talk interminably about cricket? a topic so soon exhaustible and very dull: why will they bore their brothers so? at a school one can't avoid it much. What horrible profanity this thought-reading is: or rather Stuart Cumberland's rejection of his

* The Rev. G. Richardson was second master of Winchester at this time and it was part of his office to act as House master to College. He was universally known as Dick, and Mrs. R. or Mrs. Dick, his wife, was well known to that generation for her motherly care both to College men and Commoners.

own powers: it is quite dreadful altogether. I don't know what it tends to.

Positivism ought to be rather down in the market just now: and Lucifer, Son of the Twilight! People are beginning to see that moonshine won't sustain life at any price: neither M. Arnold's Culture, nor Fred. Harrison's Humanity go down much: whereas Catholic Socialism and Spiritualism, being non-tangible in their etheriality, are the hope of millions. Creeds and articles and dogmas are necessary: they need not be absurd intrinsically. I believe on Mrs. R.'s authority that A. is coming down for Eton Match: if so, would you tell him that I should not be able to see much of him, as some of my people will be here whom I couldn't well desert.

What do people at Oxford think of Emerson, who seems by the critical faculty rather set in the ascendant? It is a sign indeed: but I can't forgive him for leaving his priestly orders for the lecture desk.

I trust the Chatterton diploma work reached you. Do you know Ll. Davies' book on Ephesians, etc.? a splendid specimen of orthodox breadth.

I have been reading the Bishop of Exeter's Bampton lectures from newspaper reports: they are very noble.

To B.

College,
May 10, 1884.

In this beautiful spring, when life is so beautiful and the world so mystical, I can think more clearly than at other times: and now I have been told by the inspiration of the spring what is best for my life as a man.

I can only bore you with all this: but I cannot help that.

My conclusions may surprise you. I will be a priest of the Church of England, as I have so often dreamed of being. I will explain. I do long with all the energies of hope to be an influence: I have the wish undefined. My nature can only lead me to the methods of spiritual, artistic, emotional expression, and I feel that for this to be carried out I must have ground to stand upon. For, you know, we do believe all that Christianity gives us: and time and the spirit of historic impulse have moulded Christianity into many forms for influencing men: and I now see plainly that in all these things, religion and science, state policy and soup kitchens, organization is imperative. I do not, perhaps, believe that Jesus is a personal God; but I believe in Jesus: he may be dead: but not His words or life: they are deathless. I can conscientiously (oh, that pestilential word)

"take orders," I love the expression. What hypocrisy is there in enrolling myself with the visible spiritualists: shall I turn my poor back on the Church because it is a medley of grotesque and divine? I may try and write something not all unworthy of being read: but that is not work altogether, and I distrust myself. I cannot bear to think of the Church simply left to drift itself hopelessly into vacuity for want of fresh steersmen: it is a live protest against materialism, and shall not die. A body which has embraced Keble, Mansel, Stanley, Maurice, Robertson, Pusey, etc., can surely tolerate even me? and I am not certain how far I am justified in refusing to join the Church, so long as nothing from myself tells me no: if the Church cast me off, well, I can but go: but not till then. Only think of the chances which the priesthood offers: the countless influences of the pulpit and the altar, all potent against the devil in even feeble hands: and how I could train myself! All other ways of communion with the spirits of our brothers are so half-hearted: altruism from the independent standpoint of misty intuition unsupported by circumstances may be noble in the abstract: but have all the cliques and sets of philosophers won the world? I know the Society of Jesus and the Brotherhood of St. Francis of Assisi as mighty influences: hardly the Positivists or Idealists. Don't misunderstand me: I

acknowledge the higher view of solitary truth, regarded as not solitary, but only *the truth* in an uncongenial soil: but you will never make the soil congenial by preaching noble uncongenialities: I, with labour, might do a little work for you as a pioneer.

I feel more encouraged by what I have told you lately: I have such perfect sympathy with all forms of life and thought, and nothing really is repulsive to me: I do think I might do good. All truth is one: truth wears strange garments.

By the way, I protest against your petty denunciation of "æstheticism": in the vulgar sense I mostly agree with you: but so far as it means the gospel of emotion waking as an artistic morality it is a high hope for mankind: true, never eat lotus, lotus is poison, and, in truth, an insidious and unknown one.

I did think of the Church of Rome: I am not sure yet! but you see what I am driving at.

To B.

College,
May 13, 1884.

I send you a double instalment of literary boredom: the first I forgot to post. I have just got your letter: thank you.

So people still "defame"? Pardon me, I

do not know "that beast of a word, defame." Oh, the world does: but then, that poor world of impossible grotesques! I write in front of a mass of marsh-flowers of kinds, and laugh at the world, and love it.

Some one is now trying to make the organ tell me that "I know that my Redeemer liveth"! It does it very lamely, but that is inevitable: my flowers tell it me plainly, tho' you seem to doubt it.

Will you pardon me if I say that to me you appear too—don't laugh—too "serious"; not, of course, in a true sense of the word, but you seem to me hardly to appreciate the happiness of circumstances. I stated my "artistic" views the other day to you, and you were indignant; I now soften them. Cannot you laugh at and with everything? Death, Christ, yourself, your friends, your fears, your life, your hopes . . .? I do, invariably: and I am not irreverent. I simply feel that life is exquisitely humorous, even in its miseries: and my laughter brightens it. Ah, life is very awful with its infinitudes of woe and doubt: then don't think about all these things as serious, but as questions and jests of an unknown God, which he wants us to guess at and laugh over. A bad painting: a starving family: a false note: all wrong, equally wrong, all springing from the same causes, all to be remedied, protested against. Love: love every one and all things, laugh at

bad things, and, as an American mystic says, "kiss them white."

I have just had a new experience: I have completely lost my temper. I have received an omen: viz., the discovery that I have inadvertently torn up my first "serious" attempt at tragedy (my earliest was at the age of eight, and began in Purgatory). Of the ruins I only discovered a few lines, which I inflict upon you, they being very ominous in their preservation.

But I can laugh, I think, now.

Such godly weather! Oh, such getting up early to see the sun rise, and watching the beautiful moon by night! That poor world. I hope it is happy. I am.

If I seem somewhat French and disconnected it is because I have been swallowing Victor Hugo, a large supper for the gods: but such a god himself! and so gentle. Fearon is very "nice": as yet, no more or less.

I think Buddhism is not an approachable subject: but then it is not Buddhism, it is the world! if that be not casuistry.

A priest! I am to be a priest! What do you think of it? Do think of it as I put it in my first letter: I am almost decided.

Of course I don't mean a mitre in a shrine, or even a stall: but a vantage ground of my own, an enticing people under the pretence of

shovel hattism, to put it openly. Oh, it is a high ideal!

Reflect! For what else am I suited? literature does not teach people as I want to teach them (allow the conceit). And I won't degrade it, as people say. Reflect.

I have carefully studied the prayer-book and the priest-making part: I can honourably go thro' that process.

Knox Little is going to preach here sometime: could you come and hear him again? Possibly I shall be at New College by October year: otherwise, two years: I want the latter; my people, the former: I love this home so very much.

I must conclude.

Beyond all strain of aching human eyes
The expectation of white angels is.
And pleasant garden-walls for washen souls.
Have you not seen where, in a western tract,
The sun shoots clear, green tapers up to God,
Athwart a bed of spreading primroses?
I think you cannot see the ends of them
Cling in soft network at the feet of God,
But your sight fadeth into pearly haze
Or, caught aside by just a peeping star,
Hangs on the troubled bosom of the day.
I think you cannot see beyond these things,
Not though your eyes should catch the falling dews,
Nightly, and the grey owls should be to you
As dear, familiar friends, from long aspect
Of the same cloudy moon. . . .

There: that is the only relic of my tragedy! What an omen!

The speaker was a melancholy, middle-aged, modern man, speaking to a girl.

To B.

College,
May 19, 1884.

Last night I sat up in the moonlight from eleven to four, with a very clever and strange quasi-friend of mine, discussing theories, especially mine: and now I get your letter. Altogether I am provided with thought. I will make one remark to stand good for the future: as a personal favour, don't talk to me of Positivism. I won't have Materialism—the only ism I can't love: and Positivism, by its accursedly presumptuous name, condemns itself.

No! I have not found my God in your sense: for I never lost him: never doubted him: by "him" I mean, facts and thoughts and persons and possibilities, not I, but part of me. That God is in the Church, is he not, as well as any otherwhere? Oh, yes! I could be a Baptist, a Romanist, an Anglican, a Mormon, with almost equal faith.

Don't think I have no convictions capable of accurate definition: I have, on many points: but I hate definition, as a meanness towards the Infinite.

You are not "aequo animo" with regard to bishops and lawn sleeves and that ilk: of course there is nothing in them of holy: but is a Government official with a taste for red tape, cause for eschewing the constitution? I will be—no! am now—a priest because I take the priesthood for my office in the world. The man paints, writes, fights, diplomatizes, loves, etc.: I am a priest. And truly so: for my own nature leads me thitherward almost to Ultramontanism. I am not changed: I am hardly inconsistent. Prayers for all and sundry, grotesque and arabesque in creed—well, what of that? is that the Church's *raison d'être* or standpoint?

To come to details I am, prospectively, a consecrated priest: I am set apart: well! the world can't get over the fact, and it likes it: the world even listens complacently: it is a little roused: I may do some good: I won't have a parish, but try and get the loaves and fishes by literature. I will be all things to a few men. Conceited? No! only priestly element in strong assertion.

You hardly go—pardon me—deep enough into the creeds: you, I imagine, find no stumbling block to your admiration of Athens in the fact that it believed in Olympus gods: nay, they transfigured sea and land: but the Trinity? you say. Well, so the Trinity, as an intellectual aspiration.

I have a very firm faith in hierarchy as a need of humanity: I think man is made for priests. So, the Buddhist system does not in that way disgust me, but rather elevates me.

For the last two or three years I have worn round my neck out of sight a Rosary, blessed by Pius IX, given me by a dying Romanist cousin, whose last words were, "You will use it in Paradise, if not before that." I know as no one else can the value of such "superstition."

How can I laugh? Oh, how could I not do so? Do you not see that the only true way of religious life is a profound irreverence, so to speak? a kind of jesting with God, or universal merriment? "I am a priest: I am also a man who love and laugh: I tell you as God's truth that the mystery of pain is merely the mark of joy, that all things are full of joy and audacious revelry: that Artemus Ward and Thomas à Kempis are brothers: I am a priest."

Do you understand? If you possess a dictionary strike out the words "materialism" and "rationalize." They are Satan and Beelzebub. You rationalize the Church! Why the Church is spiritual, and your spirit must feel her spirit! Christ is up to date, beyond it: but a dead man. His spirit lives, and is alive for evermore: Amen. *Thus* is Christ risen from the dead: thus his risen spirit ascended

up to God, seen of his disciples, the likeness of a man, of a man, being God by light of manhood glorified. Is that orthodox, or only the Truth? I don't care. All the world over you get the unloveliness of bishops, etc., but roses have thorns, even in Paradise.

> Mutual forgiveness of each sin,
> Such are the gates of Paradise.

I am of Blake's humanity: do, please, read him if you can.

Poor N.! How very miserable he ought to be! and how foolish of him. Well, he is food for laughter, so he has a mission.

How do flowers tell me my Redeemer liveth? Because I see in them Paley's "evidence of design," i.e., incarnate love. What right have flowers to be beautiful, unless they are full of love and real divinity? Flowers have souls. And don't think I am a dilettante jester: I know how uncouth the world is to a great extent, and long to do good: so I say: "There is no hell: no sin: no anthropomorphism: no evil: no uncleanness: all love: no philosophy except of the spirit: I am a priest."

Just grasp the attitude as you would a Browning study: you must see it. Oh, why has the Church failed but because it talks of sin and not of love? let me try my best.

Do you know "Saul"? or believe in it?

Christ, the one completion of humanity, being the most human in his divinity? and, observe, Christ is pure man, all man, essential man: full of warm life and love, a perfect man: but all God, the thought! raised to the glories of ecstatic passion of love and true Godhead by the force of the *burning* fire of love: God in essence, man in substance, perfect God, perfect man. Is that orthodox? or only true? I think I am no heretic. The Church is a holy thing: full of error and whitewash, and dead men's bones, and potential love! Perhaps I may make my laughter clearer to you by the force of love: I mean love precludes sorrow except the passion of regret or aspiration: never wailing. Do animals not feel for their bereavements? yet they are silent but for the eyes.

Love! Incarnate love of man for man becoming God! God and man all one, divinity paradoxical.

Ave, Maria, ora pro nobis!

There! is not that a real act of love: that wild, gentle cry to the incarnate Maidenhood of the ideal love, ora pro nobis! Not we ourselves, not we, but thou, be thou us to God. Oh, B., I think you can be a priest yet.

"Earth's Immortalities"! What, are the "memory, hope, love of vanished years," all that is ours? No! I know nothing, I am ignorant, only a priest of God! but love is

God, and when we love we are creators of God, the new creation of starfire and immortal tears! Oh, God! thy priest! thy priest!

To B.

COLLEGE,
May 24, 1884.

I hope I shall have heard from you before you get this: I don't know why I write: and I ought to be reading Guyzot. Perhaps it is because I have been reading again the *City of Dreadful Night:* Good God, it is dreadful! but see what poor Thomson makes of your humanizing Love: how impotent it is by itself! And what do I place with it! what twin divinity of emotion? Well, I hardly can formulates shadows: say, the meaning of the Trinity, the significance of Science, the "mystery of pain." Words! words! all phantoms of my ignorance, mere floating visions of the Invisible. But—a pulpit! and the Divine, the Beautiful, the Incarnate Abstract, the Immanent Concrete! Oh, to beguile men's minds with these, to juggle with my false position as a violin player with his God: raising and depressing emotions by the art of impulse. Is this horrible? search and see.

I am very restless: can never be at work in a groove: but I am faithful to the Spirit-

land! I think you hardly realize the intense reality to some minds of the Spirit: how they rustle their wings against our dusty, sin-flushed, sorrow-worn faces, and soothe them into sleep: Oh, the awful truth of that! I cannot—could not, give up that world of my love: I do prosaically believe in it, as I do in the electric force. But then—Christ lives! lo, he is alive for evermore: alive, near me, by me as I write: his eyes may have read this before yours do. When I laugh, he is my laugh: if I am disconsolate, he is my anodyne: and Shelley is with him, and Plato, and Dante hand in hand with Beatrice: they are Spirits: with identity of love and goodness: not themselves, but each his brother! each (logic) God. So that prayer is a live thing: Christ, have mercy upon us! Aye, and he tells us how he had mercy in his audacity of indiscrimination on an adulteress. Oh, what matters it whether I pray to Christ or a dead dog? both are live spirits now.

England and, I think, the world wants Christ more than other spirits, though his brothers. You will let me just talk a little about him to a few souls before I go to him and Shelley, and receive their kiss?

Gaiters: convocation: the Book: the *Church Times:* the Bishop of Manchester: and the House of Lords.

What of these? why, a soul that wants to be exalted above the stars cares nothing for

these: you must see how absolutely unimportant these things are to affect my position in the Church of Christ.

Browning thinks that Shelley would in time have come to accept the religion of Christ. Yes! if he ever rejected it: which is a point. Tell me what you mean to do when you meet like Rachel in Rama: with the Songs of the Shirt, with cries of the children: with grief and pain in every form? will you say: "I love you: all is love: I can't give you reasons for godliness, but sanitation is the next best thing: be cultivated: beauty is truth, truth beauty." Is that your gospel to the lost of London? I will tell them of a land of Infinite Pity, where Sin is a Virtue, where Love means Peace with brothers: where all will, must come, purified: I will not take upon myself the "science of theometry": nor give geography's aid to my land: if they ask me, where is it? I will say, in your hearts now: after Death, hearts are love and spirits whole.

Why do we live, unless to live again? Do we sin against nature, by not developing? we must develop: did the last gorilla think to himself: "I am about to become man: I know all about it"?

So we know not: but we, being higher, can have intuitive certainty of development. Your "Higher Pantheism" is on my side: "Saul" is on my side: Darwin is with me. And you?

Spirits, numberless, aureoled with love, garmented with compassion, scientifically exact! spirits everywhere: the dead "a-ticking like a clock": And you an Athanasius contra that world?

Death and Love: why do you think that "poets sing you fancies" about these two? surely there is a "reason in nature." Love is perfected in death: not by the casting of the flesh, tho' that is a higher state, because it is the next state scientifically: (while we are fleshly, flesh is good): but love is perfected by the transition to the land of otherwhere, the land of dreams and fancies, where poets live, while yet on earth.

Why do you persist in thinking of these things as mere fantasies, beautiful imaginings? I tell you, they are actualities. No revelation is here needed: all savage races believe by instinct of stern logic in "animism": a savage dreams of a chair: that must be a real thing: ergo, chairs have souls, true chairs for the spirit land! most rigid logic throughout.

Try to think of what I say as truth for a day: see if it has no effect upon you. But, whether you believe it or not, I will not let you sell your birthright for the accurate hell-broth of positivist cooking: you are spiritual, and cannot help it!

I must send you a passage in Peacock's *Memories of Shelley*, which I quite by chance

lighted upon after finishing my rhapsodies. Very significant: and before unknown to me.

1813.

"He has many schemes of life. Amongst them all the most singular that ever crossed his mind was that of entering the Church. We were walking in the early summer through a village where there was a good vicarage and garden . . . he stood admiring it. The extreme quietness of the lane, the pleasant pathway through the churchyard, and the brightness of the summer morning apparently concurred to produce the impression under which he suddenly said to me, 'I feel strongly inclined to enter the Church.' 'What,' I said, 'to become a clergyman with your ideas of the faith?' 'Assent to the supernatural part of it,' he said, 'is merely technical. Of the moral doctrines of Christianity I am a more decided disciple than many of its more ostentatious professors. And consider for a moment how much good a clergyman may do. In his teaching as a scholar and a moralist: in his example as a gentleman and man of regular life: in the consolation of his personal intercourse and of his charity among the poor, to whom he may often prove a most beneficent friend when they have no other to comfort them. It is an admirable institution that admits the possibility of diffusing such men over the surface of the

land. And am I to deprive myself of the advantages of this admirable institution, because there are certain technicalities to which I cannot give my adhesion, but which I need not bring prominently forward?' I told him that I thought he would find more restraint in the office than would suit his aspirations. He walked on some time thoughtfully, then started another subject, and never returned to that of entering the Church."

A little unShelleyan: but very true and helpful to me now. The mere thought of the priest Shelley! God's priest, who rejected marriage, was expelled from Oxford, was branded and spat upon! Saint Shelley!

To change subject, tell A. I go to gymnasium every day of my own accord, and am really developing somewhat, tho' yet no Hercules!

Pardon me if you know my extract.

To B.

May 26, 1884.

Compare my hierarchy with Comte's. What do you think of a few souls, elect, precious, mere memories and records beside my spiritual spheres filled with all dead things, where Christ and Cicero and tortured animals are together glorified: all equal in glory and majesty?

If you call my vision moonshine, what else can you call Comte's monarchy of mighty memories but mere corpse-lights to show "there lies a noble life: all dead now!"

I take up the orthodox "arguments against infidelity": and I ask you how do you propose to deal with practical, even vulgar, sorrows and cares? Will you tell of beauty? of an ideal perfection in each man's heart, floating about the world capable of union into consummate ecstasy of love? ah, so attractive, is it not, to the starving poor! it pays their rent and is warm "against winter come."

You fools everywhere!

Pardon me if I am rather bitter, but I can tolerate no shams: and I see clearly that anything short of spiritualism is a sham, by itself.

Appeal to your own nature as it prompts you to believe or not. Don't you feel instinctively that a "belief in ghosts" is a natural superstition, even if nothing more? I never disbelieve nature.

And the Church, perverted, protesting, reactionary, the Church is still the main witness to the truth as it is in Christ, the truth of mystical revelations and holy visions. "Credo quia ineptum! credo quia impossible"—that is, you might well take that position, the Romanist one: I take that of the idealist, the spiritual Emersonian. Combine all philosophies in one, think of Christ, Buddha, Swedenborg, Kant,

Fichte, Jacobi, Emerson, et hoc genus omne: is there one of them but believes in spiritualism in some form? Is the little French professor with his smattering of sciences, a doughty dabbler in divinity, a greater man than these our fathers who gave us the hell and the death and our earth?

To B.

COLLEGE,
May 30, 1884.

I was waiting to hear from you, who had not written for ages. I knew you would like Canon King: I do not know him except in the pulpit: my people have often met him at High Church gatherings and the like. He is a splendid man: so are they all who are really priests, not ministers.

Poor Swedenborgian! reforming his creed! Why, how does he want it reformed? it is perfect except "Heaven and Hell." Do come down here to listen to God speaking through Knox Little: the man's face is better than a Fra Angelico angel. He will be here on June 29th. I read *Bishop Blougram* over for the third time carefully within a week last night, to verify my position. I think it is sound, even in Gigadib's eyes: and the *Death in the Desert*—well, that is "so comfortable."

It is unspeakably lovely now: birds, sun,

orchises, wild roses, warm growing grass: and the spirits so close, so very close.

Do you believe in "movements"? Is the East End agitation a new one? If so, cannot something be done to make it a true and holy influence at work, by spiritual advance of thought? in short, by my gospel? I am conceited enough to believe it possible. I see no new element in this sympathy with poor humanity, if you deprive it of spirituality: but a gospel of toleration, a proclamation of no sin,—that, with the spirit-land, the Hereafter, would be the leaven: and, with God's help, the lump should swell to cover all England. Dreams! but that is the right aim. A pitched battle with the devil, the Protestants and Positivists: what would come of that? I am hopeful, and at least something must be the result.

If you think of it, the time is quite at hand for a new direction. Only consider: Tractarianism: Pre-Raphaelitism: Science: all things, have culminated into fixed lights now, steadily shining, as stationary as the live lights of the Renaissance and Reformation. There must be a new light kindled for our generation: and I am Comtist enough to believe that it will be a comprehensive one: only, not scientifically so, but rather spiritually, so that art, poetry, science, social ethics, etc., will be as beautiful scintillations from the bright star of loving

spiritualism, glowing in the sphere of Infinity. Is it merely rhapsody: but no, it is surely possible, and possibilities are growing facts.

And for this we must take the Kingdom of Heaven—I mean, the Church of England—by storm. We must fill the Church with Atheist priests if you like: with Arians, Unitarians, Anythingarians: but we must fill it. And then—we shall see what then. Circumstances will guide us, and we circumstances. Why not be a priest yourself?

We don't want logic and philosophy, especially the latter. It won't work. Emerson men laugh at, forsooth, as "no philosopher" had "no system": No! Emerson had no system: had Jesus? Eschew altogether the miserable affectations of Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Comte; hate all systems of that nature: but love the great idealists, Kant, Schelling, Fichte, Emerson. These are not philosophers: they are inconsistent, just as Christ was. Why, it is all quite simple.

Love produces suffering.
Suffering produces love.

Round and round, along the ages, that is the spiral ascension to God. I love: then I must see and feel pain, to feed my love. That is all. Why do you live? to be and do, i.e., to satisfy your nature and soul. In art and litera-

ture, as in toil: but still, always satisfy your being. If you sing, there must be a hero to be sung by you: if you are heroic you will find yourself welcomed to the artistic hearts of inspired brothers. Interdependence: there is the secret of it all.

I wish you could love the services of the Church: pardon me, but I even think it would be an expression of love in you if you did. These glorious festivals we are celebrating now, the Ascension of Manhood into the Godhead: the Feast of the Holy Ghost, i.e., the consequent reception into Manhood of the divine spirit: oh, the ineffable loveliness of these things! You may say, "Look what the Church makes of them: dogmatic unintelligibility." No! some Churchmen do! not the Church. Do realize the "beauty of holiness" in the Catholic sense: the beauty of ecstatic worship: you will find it one of the nearest approaches permitted to the ideal Beauty of Plato. Man is a gregarious animal. The simple old truth is so useful: we must have churches—no, that is not it: we must have the Church where "all men may dwell." Communion with God means visible love to man. The Church militant takes up the need, and becomes our mother to lead us to one another, so, to God, home.

Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy means healthy. Do you not see, now? And beyond the death of the world perhaps we shall see God, and

know what Dante calls the highest intellectual delight. Till then, we will love.

Do send me the inaugural paper of the "Chatterton Club." Good name: you know his confession of faith?

To B.

COLLEGE,
May 31, 1884.

At eight this morning I began to read your paper, very slowly: at nine I went to Chapel, and joined in singing the Athanasian Creed: and now, at 10.30, I have finished your paper.

"This is the Catholic Faith": that rang in my ears as I read the last sheets: and, strange to say, I was left with the impression that you and Athanasius were at one "except a man believe, faithfully, he cannot be saved." You are both right in different ways: but the pathos of it, and the pity! Saved: and how? At the bar of our own hearts we bring ourselves to judgment and give sentence on ourselves; for only ourselves know our own work, whether it be of God.

Do thy duty: be true: be loving: be joyous: be thyself and not another—that is the creed of the world.

I would not throw open your arms to all Oxford: I think a great danger lies in that:

the danger of public publicity: be as you are, open to all the world, shirk nothing: but don't let in the world: I have a conviction that such holy societies as the Chatterton must be entirely composed of individuals who know each other perfectly, as friends may: reality and sincerity come that way. Tell me, if you will, who compose the Society—that is, what Winchester friends, if any.

Poor Chatterton may be happy now—I hope so.

Do you know the lovely act of love which Catholic Churchmen practise: taking the Sacrament "with intention"? I am just about to celebrate Jesus' death for all of you, in the spirit: praying that my Eucharist may avail for you by a double gift of grace? Words? surely not so.

Write when you have time, if you will.

Do you know personally Scott Holland? I only know *Logic and Life*, his voice, and his strange, sometimes beautiful, face. How do these men believe? it would do you good to find out: Radicals in social and political questions: enthusiasts for science: holy and humble of heart: and stout Churchmen, who swallow creeds and gaiters with equal zest and belief in their efficacy. "Is there a reason in nature?" I always pity poor Cardinal Wiseman when I think of these men: he was one of them, born out of due time: and now he is

quite happy at Rome. I never cared for Pusey and Wilberforce, or even Keble: but the newer school, K. Little, Holland, Haweis, King, and thousands more, are wonderfully attractive to me.

There is such an exhilaration in the growing physical strength! I go to Gymnasium for an hour a day, and can now contemplate my blistered, hardening hands with less æsthetic disgust and more satisfaction.

I am enjoying myself with writing a poetical allegory by way of an "English Essay on the Results of the Insular Position of Great Britain." The weather is too beautiful for practical thought.

Again thanking you for your paper.

To B.

COLLEGE,
June 6, 1884.

I am so glad: I shall not forget next Sunday in the early morning. Oh, how wonderful a leveller is love! Neither bond nor free in Christ, who is Love: and God is Love: and Christ is a spirit now. Work that out to the end; you will find yourself so happy at the goal of life.

Do you know the volume of Shelley's *Letters* edited and prefaced by Browning, but with-

drawn on the discovery of their non-genuineness? there you will find Browning's opinion as to Shelley's Christianity. Yes, Aprile equals Shelley; but only as the Suntreader of Pauline equals Shelley: both adumbrations of the Sun-god of Love and Music.

I yesterday saw Matthew Arnold, whom I had seen but once before: a strange face, with too little tenderness to be quite lovable: not like Browning's expression when he is moved by anything, as music or his dead wife's poems. I am very dejected at your hopeless inability to come here: could you not possibly spare one day? but you can't, so I won't be importunate.

Scott Holland's face shows how completely Love can beautify things not of their own selves beautiful: his grotesque Japanese features are simply lovely. I will really return your paper to-morrow: but I have been pondering on it long.

I had a dream last night: I was a priest of Rome, alone before the altar: and the chancel roof seemed to burst apart, and a chain of flowers swung down to me out of the blue, and as I tried to climb, I woke. Expound.

I have little time now, having to write verses for "English Verse"—on Gordon!

To B.

College,
June 15, 1884.

You have not heard from me lately, nor have I from you: that means very little. And even now that I am breaking a happy silence, it is mainly for practical purposes.

You once mentioned a picture—whether engraving, etching, etc., I don't know—of Shelley in your possession. Can you tell me where I can get a portrait of him, not unworthy of his name? I have hunted all London, and can't light upon what I want. It is for a cousin who almost literally prays to Shelley, having lost all her other gods. Could you help me here? Also I will send you *To my Brethren* at once: and you must not be more than reasonably angry with me for having detained your property.

C.'s face I now possess, and his letters: of all the good your friendship has been to me, his friendship and brotherhood are the best. And that is high praise. What kind of being is R. of the *Leaflet*, with whom I have interchanged a letter or two, and sent him some verses? He seems very much in earnest.

I have met Spooner, of New College, here: he talked omnisciently of all of you: you in

especial he analysed with the intensest air of certainty. A fearless man in what he says.

You will write and let me have an answer to my question?

To C.

College,
June 22, 1884.

Thank you for the sight of your envied caligraphy after long silence. I have been unable to favour you with any specimens of hieratic hieroglyphs, through the claims of "English Verse." I think I have won a little insight into the boundless mystery of blank verse: the language and organ tone of God and Shelley and Milton and Browning.

Of course you have seen poor Toynbee's book: and have digested his ideas on the relations of Church and State. Cannot I be a priest of that Church and serve that Church? though, as you will have seen, he lays more stress on intellect and precision of logical formula than I should be disposed to do. But mysticism is never very popular with social reformers.

I, too, am going to leave an old home, and exchange the forests of Windsor for the wilds of Wales: otherwise, Flintshire: where, in an ancient and dilapidated mansion I purpose to study ghosts, who are "authentic."

I assent as to cricket: but it is an annoyance of intense pungency.

If you are really so wicked as to wed music to worthless words, might I say that my first thoughts are the best: and the omission of "the while" improve sense and sound! I know Putnam's book: a very useful one for its purpose, as a contrary blast to Ingersoll and Bradlaugh; but a painful one otherwise. Toynbee accepts both postulates: I do, in a sense.

I envy you your seclusion: though I am very self-contented just now, quantum mutatus! O Lucifer, Son of the Morning! and you abandon even in song the "woes that no tears may stay"! but I am so glad if it sent me your lines, which I return after copying. I have had Toynbee pointed out to me in Oxford Street: and I know his face so well: I shall recognize him in the spirit-land before God points him out. Do you know Heine? I am revelling in the infinitude of his genius, in translations: but the infinite grandeur of his modesty! his work makes a deeper impression on me than most men's, except Dante. Do you care for "Pauline"? Whatever Browning may think of it, he has never beaten it in exquisite cadence and natural charm of description; two not characteristic things in my god at all times. Just come from Chapel: heard a clever man and earnest priest eloquently propounding the

duty of hating sin and abhorring evil: "love is out of place in proximity to sin," I was internally boiling: how can they be so monstrous?

So they reject Women's Suffrage? Do you know, I am almost glad? Politics are too small things to engross Sappho and Mrs. Browning and Miss Rossetti and the Brontës.

June is perfect here: quite golden, with soft air and charming limes, and blue beyond: and more talk of "Eton Match"! O tempora! Am waxing incoherent: so will cease annoying.

To B.

College,
June 26, 1884.

I take a guilty pleasure in writing to you instead of reading Thucydides' Browningisms: I feel polemically inclined to-night. As to the priesthood—you weaken your cause by your array of names: I take them individually.

Shelley believed in Christianity: by which I mean the story of the Gospels, as a literature of practical didactism: his own words are my argument as I gave them you.

Emerson was ordained, wore surplices, preached: and at last turned his coat or rather his surplice for his coat: but he upheld consistently the theory of priesthood: vide *Essays*, passim.

Toynbee says, "I wish more young men would take orders: at present there is so much unwillingness": as to the rest, their work is extraneous.

I protest now and always against your anti-Churchism: Baudelaire—no Bishop's man—says, "Christian sentiment and work are useless without a visible Church: brotherly co-operation is effete without an hierarchical organization." What of that, most unpractical of iconoclasts.

The good Bishop of Rochester* has turned a man out of the Church for denying the literal doctrine of the Resurrection, whilst confessing its mystical worth. Now, I do not deny the literal fact: Christ rose the third day, to assure his disciples: for he was a Mahatma, adept, brother: you see? and so why should I scruple to declare belief in the dogma and preach its significance? Your ideas are so unpractical: I will shock you by saying that religion is a corporate thing as well as an individual yearning: but it is true. Demoralize the Church! You talk like the *Church Times* on "Erastianism." The Church must be a State Department to be effective: granted your firm outline and

* Dr. Thorold, afterwards Bishop of Winchester. He had inhibited the Rev. Charles Marson for preaching a sermon saying that it was not necessary to believe in a literal flesh and blood resurrection.

skeleton it remains to fill it up with individual aims and energies.

Of course I don't define sin: I can't sound a bathos. But does that affect my position? The Church, viewed as an aggregate of dignitaries, talks a fair amount of wild ridiculosity: but—and this you forget—the Church means you and I and all men, and no bishop can alter that fact. A poor man without a church? Think what that means if you can. An uncultured man with spiritual feelings undefined in the heart of him, crying out for love and help: and you come to him, *one man*, by yourself, and let your "Christian sentiment babble love" and he is so comforted, is he not? don't you feel that to enter a Church is all the world to him: whereas individual love and Frederic Harrison and the Hall of Science are nothing? You must feel that, if you have heart or soul. It is so real, so real, so urgent: I will be a priest.

Once introduce a spirit of toleration and love and pity instead of shudders and cold shoulders and shriekings, and all is done: then in Laud's words, "If the Church cannot stand, God help her: I cannot." People say, "You want vague philanthropy, differing from an -ism in state aid and surplices and endowments: we want dogmatic truth and precision of formularies." Yes, people say that: people who give alms without a thought as to the bearing

of the Athanasian Creed on it: who love their brothers without the Thirty-nine Articles. Get these good people to be consistent, to test themselves by the rule of conduct: then the Church will be a home not an hotel.

I dislike Macaulay as a writer, respect him as a man. He maligns one of my heroes—Strafford—and is a man of slippery antithesis: he never gets to the heart of anything above mediocrity.

I am behind the times Radical tho' I be: I hate Women's Suffrage, because I hate politics as I do Protestantism.

I wish we were back in Greece: the perfect πόλις and ἐκκλήσια (forgive the unclassicism) then in one: neither "demoralized."

Heine says, "God, what is He? ah, He is merely the first person I meet in the street: even if he chance to be a creditor." Oh, the infinite grandeur of Heine, the laughing Christ! do you notice how people say generally "artists and those people are very irregular": and pardon it at once: but you or I must be so strait-laced before the world: how full of meaning that is, if you catch my thought.

No more time.

Ever yours (and God's).

P.S. Pardon writing: attribute it to dread of the next two days and anticipation of the Third: Eton Match and Knox Little! Promise

me you will be present at my ordination: promise to hear my first sermon and take God's body and blood from me. Because it will assure me of many things.

To B.

College,
July 7, 1884.

Your lovely lines will live in my heart as assuredly as your letter will die there: you don't shake my position at all: calling a surplice a bib won't do it. Your sole flash and glimmer of reason—pardon me!—appears when you talk of prayer. You are wrong: wrong utterly and miserably; but with a sensible somewhat earthy wrongness. Do you forget a certain altar in Athens of the Agnostics? Surely if a man recognizes an "Infinite and Eternal Energy": if a man accepts inscrutable darkness as the vale of the Unknown: yet his recognition and acceptation imply prayers for rain and the Queen. A paradox? Oh, no! A bathos perhaps somewhat pathetic.

Are you so content with the things that are, that you will try to set them right, and yet will refuse to send your soul on the wings of Love into the thin air of the void, in search of the Unknown? prayer is merely life: merely the outward expression of vital spirituality:

O ye of little faith! If you could but know how intensely I long for the new birth of the Church: how I yearn after my dear vision of a State Church, the grandest embodied House of Commons, the temple of Liberty, the Liberty of the children of God: how I see the land, our loved English land, blossoming with fair shrines, thrilled with divine music and all beauty! you would be on my side. If only you knew my heart! Ah, how wretched you are, you spoilers of the people: but I stand in the front of time with eighteen centuries beside me. Leave the Church! I would as soon leave off to read Shakespeare and Shelley! what do you give us instead? See now! the Church emptied of us priests: the Bibles torn away: let the King of Glory come in, the new Evangel of shapeless Love and faithless Doubt! I can but repeat—the Church cannot be left alone: outside of it we can only seem hollow prophets of vain things.

And you dare to speak of the poor man's love of Christ's Church as you would of his filthy slum: as a thing education will rid him of! Yes, and it will give him the "Principles of Psychology" to read and teach his children: yes, and he will say, "I will not beat my wife because the Laws of Sociology disallow it!" What! will you dare to lay a hand upon a human soul?

Of course it is all so hard: and you excuse

me of taking the "easiest way." Ah, is it easy to preach Love and escape censure? to speak of spirits and avoid abuse? is it then so easy to conquer Bishops of Rochester by love and faith? to stand before an infidel world in a priestly garb, and before a narrow church in the guise of a man? Oh, if this be easy, truly I have chosen the easy way. But I tell you that at times of dejection I well nigh shrink from the burden of it: I well nigh am content to preach the easy doctrines of formless chaos lit with moonshine and lucifer matches! But thank Christ I am ready; I will be a priest.

I meant, is it not significant, that whilst common folk are expected to be "moral," much is pardoned to "men of genius"? As if genius was free from law by its own right? I mean, does not the world seem content to own the inferiority of morality to art whilst praising it where art is not? Fallacious on both sides: but very full of thought. Think of Sappho, Catullus, Marlowe, Heine, Villon and then of Smith and Jones.

Judge of what an effect your letter has on me when I say that it read like Voltaire or Bradlaugh: "see if these things are so," how can you? and is it worth while at all? do Christian Evidences feed orthodox souls? do unbelievers find their prop in "A Refutation of Deism"? No, both live by the inner Spirit. Suppose the Church gone: what remains?

think what she is to the land: not only a clog, but also a guide: and if we might control the Church at all by taking the Consecration of her hands, what could we not try to effect! In what way do I perjure myself? what assent do I give to things I disbelieve? If you think of the priests of England in the past, you will find place for me: by the side of Chaucer's vicar and Chillingsworth and Hooker: Oh, my conceit through Christ that strengthened me!

Among the voices of this world, the cries of soul-grinders on the whetstone of hard logic: the shrieks and sobs of shocked Pharisaism, the shouts of blatant Nothingarians: the sweet inanities of embryotic fancies, among the wails of mourners yearning into space and time after the light of dead eyes: ah, will you not let me break God's silence with one more word, peace? let me stand upon the altar steps in fair raiment and say one word to be borne away through glowing windows to the beautiful world: one word of love and peace and hope: and if you will, I will keep to myself the struggles I cannot kill: struggles against hard stones and flowerless thorns of your grafting and throwing.

Faith! up to the land of stars and dead faces and throbbing hearts! faith! up to the embodied love of God, known but in death! up to God.

To A.

College,
July 10, 1884.

At last. I can't write at length just at once; work is so exacting. Thanks for Browning, to me unknown: true largely just a little too systematizing.

What of the Bishops? the tide of many things is turning. Must go off to Glee Club, and realize Immortality.

One thing in your letter I will answer; your remarks as to my expressions of failure, remorse, etc. Ah, they are and were merely incidents in soul life; am I a God, to live for ever in changeless complacency? no, only a man; so, whilst I reject all right and wrong in themselves, surely I may still rule my life as I might carry out a fancy. And see—I live in the age of the "Welt-Schmertz." I do no wrong; am I therefore ever happy? true, my sorrows never come from consciousness of wrong; but from the vague shadow of unrest thrown over life by passing things; "a death, a chorus ending."

See! Christ conceived as very personal God is still the Man of Sorrows; not an Epicurean Lotus God. And Christ was—to the world's vulgar mind and tongue—sinless.

To B.

College,
July 16, 1884.

Much reviling hath made thee mad! can you imagine me angry with you or anything? I merely smile when you sweep me away from the altar down the tide of vacuous and beautiful moonshine. Angry? Oh, how foolish! come to Domum and don't think about disobeying me: besides, thou inconsistent one, how unchristian not to meet an angry brother! risum teneas amice?

I can't possibly come to see you elsehow: my time is literally filled up—so you must come, you see?

Have you been expecting an answer: well I have written one but won't send it: I will instead invite your attention to the fact that Rochester has re-called Marson without recantation. I won't be able to see much of you, I'm afraid: the end of the half is so busy. I am now so elated: I have failed to get the English Verse because "though my poetical powers are far superior to the prize man's and my metrical skill remarkable: I was not practical: I was too up in the air." There! isn't that enough to intoxicate! rejected on account of ethereal lightness and unvulgar impalpability! I am so conceited.

I can give you a ticket for Concert here: as a member of "Glee Club" I have some at my disposal. I won't let you off—so don't try. Was my letter very scarifying? that is a compliment to me. I am really sorry if I did hurt you at all: or rather hurt your prejudices, if I may say so.

From the father to A.

July 19, 1884.

I must write to thank you for your letter and to say how glad I am to be able to rescind the veto I felt obliged to put upon Lionel's correspondence with you.

You are aware why I thought it best for Lionel that he should discontinue such very close intimacy, having been warned that it might tend to the unsettling of his mind on religious matters; I think, however, I may now depend upon you both and trust I may never have reason to regret the confidence I place in you. I sincerely hope that the renewal of your intercourse may lead to the happiness of you both, now and hereafter.

To A.

College,
July 20, 1884.

I really found no time last week to write to you. I am writing solely on practical matters.

1. Are you coming down for certain? if so, as I imagine we should travel together, what train? I want to know for Dick's sake; he always wants early information on these points. 2. How do I get to Willesden from you? I hate looking at Bradshaw, because they get it up vilely.

"Yes, it's a very beautiful poem, a very good poem, but I don't see much Gordon in it." Fearson's * verdict; true as to latter part; Joseph got the medal. I really am quite glad; it is an incentive to action to be told one is too unearthly to succeed. I mean to work at poetry in Wales.

I do wish this Half were well over; I do so loathe Domum Day; and exams. are wearing. The Daker's sermon was splendid; "platitudes of pious imbecility" etc.; you would not have liked it; it was in my direction; entreating young men not to leave Christ through disgust at Christians; if our Christianity is different from the world's, it does not follow that it is beautiful and false; rather beautiful and Christ's truth, i.e., his Church's truth. What cowards—pardon me—you men are, who are frightened by gaiters and shovel hats; consider Christ (I am not irreverent) would wear them if he were on earth.

* Dr. Fearon: the then Headmaster.

To B.

July 20, 1884.

In haste during the press of exams.: I thank you for coming: you will find the place in a frightful state of abominable confusion and me nearly dead with worry of kinds. Tell me by what train on what day you will be here—if possible I will meet you.

You will hear fairly good music—nothing "sacred" though nothing unworthy of the name of music.

What a dreadful thing a scholar is and how I loathe scholarship and exams. I mean to work at poetry in Wales.

To A.

College,
July 22, 1884.

Just back from Glee Club, too late for post. Would J. 23 suit you? I do feel so brain wearied here amongst scholastic anxieties: but I don't care really.

Praise God for Rochester restored to health.

I will meet you on Monday in Cathedral.

Do you care for Domum Day? I do in spirit, but never in practice: these wearisome speeches and hateful dinner and lingering in demand in chambers till 2 a.m. I hate it all:

shall shirk dinner and speeches, unless you care to go. Read the last Sat. Rev. on "Esoteric Bosh": and tell me if it is true in any particular.

Can write no more.

B.'s letter is characteristic: expansive and elusively full of meaning! but uncomforting—he won't understand one.

To A.

RHUAL,
August 8, 1884.

Having but just returned from exploring Chester, I have only now got possession of Walt Whitman, for whom take as much thanks as you will: he was almost thrown at me with a remark in Welsh by the Welsh Postmaster as I walked through Mold, where a primitive cattle fair was rampant; so, the place being unconventional, I opened him on the spot, and read through the streets to the accompaniment of bellowing beasts and Welsh execrations; an appropriate scene. I am very idle here; write a ferocious tragedy in the woods, and make the acquaintance of the natives who can speak English. Shelley was beautifully wrong when he refused to extend his charity to anything coarse and earthily unrefined; they had his pity and abhorrence, not his love. To me Whitman is the nobler priest, who can declare

to the world such confessions as verse 24 of "Song of Myself," verse 48 "Native Moments," "You Felons," etc. Shelley would have the world ruled by the perfect freedom of love, but not this world, not the world of rude sensuality and earthiness, but a world among the stars where the air is too rare for anything but spirit; Whitman takes this world and shows that nothing is common or unclean; not even uncleanliness. I hardly think Shelley's the higher ideal because it is the easier; do you know "Faust"? Mephistopheles can ridicule the Shelleyan "yearning into the infinite," but when Faust begins to drain waste lands and accept the world, he is beaten. When you are happiest, you feel most inclined to treat things with favour; you find that your joy is dependent on the acceptation of the world as it is; ugliness' self becomes less intolerable; so the universal of happiness would be the absolute equality of act and word by the pervading uniter, Love. Who are you to say "This disgusts me; is therefore wrong"? Don't be vague; Love, if loving, has no limit save itself. Is this mere *laissez-faire*, mere idleness, mere self-satisfaction? God knows it means hard struggling. Poor Mark Pattison must be happy now with Scaliger and Grotius; I had rather be in hell with Shakespeare.

Are you working? and do you love Lucretius otherwise than in Tennyson?

I came across some Comtists lately who claimed Walt Whitman for their priest and hierarch; worse than the orthodox who set up pretensions to the exclusive possession of Jesus.

Is Gordon still too strong for you or too weak to yield a meaning? either way I don't care: and that is the right spirit in which to view one's attempts at poetry: and how delightfully conceited it makes one.

Do you know Wilkie Collins' *Heart and Science*, a powerful novel directed against vivisection and Professor Ferrier in especial? Tell B. to read and inwardly understand. I love doing nothing but exist: one can't annoy oneself.

Shelley's death does more to make one doubt the existence of a personal God than most things: no one but a Jewish Jehovah could have allowed it: and think what masses of vulgarity in Church and State and Society and Literature he would have saved us, if he had continued writing for twenty years more: how absolutely barren English affairs were from 1822 to 1850: bar Browning, Reform Bill and Tractarianism, and Tennyson, what good thing was there in all England? But perhaps it is "all for the best" though I don't see how. Is Jowett at all on the road to death or retirement? Oxford has had enough of shams for a time and I want some change from "the Balliol School." Have no more inclination to bother you.

To B.

RHUAL,
August 14, 1884.

I would have written before this, but have been too absolutely dreaming and indolent even for that. For your letter I thank you.

I am trying to write in front of an exquisite miniature of William of Wykeham: it prompts me to aspire to Canterbury: I should like to wear a mitre and dyed garments from Barrah or Rome. A. has just treated me to some vulgar inanities about being an Independent Minister: oblivious of things temporal and ignoring things eternal: if he, following a rational impulse, wants to adopt sacerdotalism, let him do it beautifully at least. Will you ever understand what I really, seriously, mean when I talk of the Church? I want, pre-eminently, a public setting forth of beautiful acts and emotions: and beauty means the fusion of spirit and sense. Next, I want the mass of my brothers to be able to feel that they are one in Christ or Shelley or Buddha or Hugo: one, as, men living under equal natural laws, and subject to like passions and aspirations and sufferings, i.e., I want corporate love. Required then the means of outwardly showing in the most spiritually and sensuously beautiful forms, the incarnate reality of cor-

porate love. Words, mere words, till I can find a means: hence I look around me: and I see an ancient Church Professing Christ as her Head with certain practical government and articled faith: with Shelley for polestar and Whitman for pilot I accept Bishop's tithes (a hard stumbling block), 39 Articles, even Lord Penzance: believing in none of these things, caring for none, if you throw them at me as facts: but thankfully taking home as painful yearnings after light these well nigh vulgarities and refusing to set the world's trivialities as rocks of offence in my own way. And you, professing belief in Shelley, accuse me of "perjuring my conscience." I make bold to alter the expression into "sacrificing my prejudice." Because I swear, I must be perjured, because I submit, I must be fettered, because I do not reject, I must welcome: is this your logic, ye of absolutely no faith?

Plainly, I being a human brother of millions, humbly long to leave the world none the worse for my presence, if not better: and I am not so proud as to be an "Independent Minister" when I might be an altar-priest pleading with God, is it, or Fate or Nothingness?—for the woes of helpless men and women and little children.

Do you ever find a true Churchman placing his Bishop's gaiters before his blessing, his shovel hat above his laying on of hands? well,

perhaps you may: at least hat and gaiters are not other than strong fastnesses against the strong tide of Nothingness. Oh, you pseudo humanitarians who minister to your brothers independently of aught but self: who cling to Little Bethel but abhor Cathedrals because the Chapter House and Canon's precincts are too close: you who strain at the gnat of harmless formularies and gulp down open mouthed the vulgar moonshine (excuse confusion of metaphor) of dissent: will you ever be seeking after a sign and eschewing the example of Jonah, who had scruples, doubtless conscientious, against preaching in Nineveh, because it was a dangerous stronghold of false and foolish and venomous idolatry: yet who speedily went and made that same city repent—a city, oh the pathos, which held so many little ones who "knew not the right and the left," and "also very much cattle?" poor Nineveh with its fat oxen in prebendal stalls and little children who knew not the Bishop of Manchester from Mr. Green: poor Nineveh, going to the bad whilst you are independently tossing on waves of your own arousing: poor wicked Nineveh!

Truth as an absolute known quantity or quality is not to be found: Madame Blavatsky may have found it in miraculous tea cups but hardly so as to preach it in Westminster slums: unfortunate slums: given over to the tender mercies of Monsignor Capel and Henry Edward.

I cannot now—think if you will, I am shirking difficulties—go into details of doctrines, "inhuman doctrines never taught by John" but to be found vaguely inside the bounds of a prayer book: I have done so abundantly to my own satisfaction. I have one monotone to which I will intone my life: "I will be a priest": not, you may think, the music of the spheres: but at least not out of tune. I (this epistle is egoism itself) I hope to be ordained deacon in the year 1888 or 89: to remain if possible in a Fellowship or the like at Oxford for a few years: and then to have a "cure of souls": I long for an unsophisticated parish by the dear sea: in Cornwall or Norfolk or Devon: or anywhere. To live in seclusion, writing for my bread, and being as one of the common herd: infusing beauty and the simplicity of love, the ideals of Christ and Shelley, into minds fresh from God and the great sea. And after that, twenty years of such work, I should wish to come in more constant contact with masses of hereditary misery and want: to wear out the best of my life in "our great towns." What an ambition! sincerely what an almost inconceivable aim: and oh to realize it. You may come and hiss at the parson and the State Church, and the fat livings: I thought Christ observed the Jewish law: you the independent Christs may trample the beautiful Church because bygone *νεωκόροι* have omitted to cleanse

it from the mud thrown at the carven wood of the sanctuary, nay from the foolish accretions some of themselves accumulated in Georgian days, when ladies wore patches and the Church wigs. William of Wykeham is smiling at me now with his beautiful mouth and eyes from under the weight of a jewelled mitre: and I take the blessing of his three symbolic fingers. I don't remember his being an Independent Minister: but he did shelter incipient Lollardism.

What wild hysterics I have been writing so far as you are concerned and A. Of course you will both be Church of England priests and show the Positivist Society that Auguste Comte was a well meaning fat Frenchman whom God, being a little giddy just about that time with what his world was about, forgot to make into an Archdeacon.

I may be mad: I'm not bigoted.

To B.

RHUAL,
August 20, 1884.

One thing thou lackest: sell all thine Eternities and give to the poor: and don't go away sorrowful. You steadily shut your eyes to the fact that you can't preach capital letters without illuminating them in purple and scarlet and gold: you can't preach without a pulpit. You

need not draw my attention to the existence of Goethe and Emerson and Ruskin and the other Gods: they may dispense with pulpits if they like, and be satisfied with the intelligent appreciation of the cultured classes: but I who am no demi-god with a new evangel, but merely a man talking to men, will take what vantage ground I can. For the truth is that if you once think of the meaning of the world and time and the stars, your Eternities and moralities look as small as my Church: and I being as I say a man am not above using practical methods. For observe: I do not know the word "morality" or the word "immorality" or the word "sinner" or the word "saint": my ideas are not exalted perhaps, or noble, and I am terribly on the side of worldliness. When I write a sonnet, do I reflect that there is something trivial and uninspired in sitting down to shape my thought into fourteen lines of sestet and octave? well, Whitman does: but, as I have told you, America is not England: and I would not be a priest there. You may be of Paul, you may prefer Apollos: but I am Christ's: and preach him as I best can.

Sensuality or rather vulgar indifference to the spirit of the senses—how to treat that in connection with ritualistic appeal to the senses. Well, I hardly know if I grasp your meaning: beauty you say is right, as a manifestation

of God and a means of appealing to the outer man: but what of it in re God? Well, "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty, that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." Is Keats right? When I absorb the soul and love of a picture, I worship: when I bring another to it, I have done the priest's office: I dare not pry into a strange soul: for "we mortal millions live alone." The world is very good, and the melancholy of it and the pain: God is glorified in these. Love and Truth and Freedom—are these things high and holy? then they will be powerful in the world and make it like themselves. Many messages have men syllabled and laboriously evolved to men: I speak the words of Christ, and "take away the sins of the world" not by redemption, for Christ did not barter with a personality: but by saying with Christ "I take away sin." To me it seems so strange that you should think it possible to effect real change in the world, but by power of the priesthood: you are not priests till the Bishops of Rochester or Gloucester have ordained you: you may be priests by the eternal holiness of capital letters, by the consecration of your own ideals: but you are not priests to men. I am perfectly in earnest: this earth is full of facts: and my principles will not let me despise or ignore anything; in Germany I should turn my soul into metaphysics: in France into Victor Hugo: in Italy into—well,

itself; and in England into sacerdotalism. It's the one old argument: reach the people, get hold of the world as you can, don't be exclusive, or found religions, preach love and pity and indifference. How? in what way is to you most able to be powerful: by the power of beauty and love visible in ecclesiastical tailoring if you will, and priestly haberdashery. And is this a low standard, and do I fall so very far below Shelley in my ideal? for I do not say to the drunkard "drink if you will, I don't know why you drink: I won't presume to dictate: I love you," but "Brother, can I help you?"

You see I can't spend my life in getting together a Church and founding a sect or party: I find my means ready at hand, and use them. I know what Mazzini taught: I know how Emerson is not apparently for me, and that Goethe would not applaud me: but my spirit justifies itself. At least I can do no wrong, for I know not what wrong is. The Church is Catholic: Christ made her able to rear the nations in her bosom. Men shall be told that they may be sensualists, liars, cowards, worldlings, even vestrymen, and yet men as high as Christ. My Church may reek with the fumes of wine and cigars, and ring with the cries of gambling hells and brothels: "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." I work for and in the present, because I am a

fatalist, otherwise a believer in evolution. If I can make men who are immoral, trivial, careless, believe that the world is holy by their human presence, that love is the great leveller, I will leave you to preach Love to the few elect. I best know my own powers: and I know the Church is what I want. Can you see nothing but shams in my ideal, because it cares not a jot for Eternities, i.e., sees Eternities where you see miserable pretence.

I don't think the real life that has moved on the earth's surface since the days of the Mastodon has at all varied in real character: always gay carelessness, high seriousness and law moving through all and in all. "Think of many things": of Greece, of Japan, of the Pampas, of Lapland, of London: is not life mainly the same? the future developments of the world. I neither know, nor greatly care to know: at least I see my own age. Don't say that I choose the smooth path: to justify the ways of Bishops to man is appalling in its hopeless immensity of labour: to wear white robes before men is to provoke mud throwing. I am just a piece of life, as is a dog or a railway porter or the Mahdi: let me live my life as I will. To write "poetry": to preach my own crochets: to love men and women and hate capital letters and H more than any: there is my life.

You may be "free among the dead": or

free among the unborn: I prefer to be free among the living: "chacun à son gout."

Whitman would let me seek ordination at the hands of a bishop or else abjure his own principles: am I inconsistent? very well then, I am inconsistent. If you want to strip me of priestly clothing shew me that the world of ignorant peasantry, vulgar bourgeois, and ridiculous aristocrats will refuse my preaching: till then don't try. Of course the clouds would object to my surplice: but I am not in the clouds. Pilate was wise who "would not stay for an answer."

To A.

RHUAL,
August 28, 1884.

I know I should have written before this; I wrote and forgot to post the letter, will do so now. You see Poetasters think themselves of more consequence than all else; and I am absorbed in my play, of which I have written 1,200 lines, and I am deeply interested in trying my powers; I really think I have read worse. It is intensely wretched and hopeless; and I call it "Miserabilia." And really nothing else now interests me at all, not even the Church.

Thanks for your past lucubrations; according to my lights very interesting and attractive,

but don't think me heartless, if I say, foolish; not that they need be so to you; I merely read, mark, and am scientifically observant. Of course the world would be rather mean if it accepted my views; but I don't think that a misfortune.

It is more in creating that one sees the truth of my gospel of commonplace and *laissez aller;* when I catch an exact cadence for my line, or find a subtle alliteration, or succeed in presenting a character, I know that morality is non-existent; artists in verse and stone and colour will tell you otherwise sometimes; but not the Gods. And my Church work would be the same; the reading of antiquated, picturesque prayers; the preaching heresies to one's brothers; the whole system of Church order would be merely acts of independent creation; true, not absolutely free acts; but free, so far as I am able to use freedom: which point I have settled to my satisfaction. Just think, a man's life is not his acts of profession; drills, sermons, death beds, stone breaking, are not the life; but accidents of the life; the life is the sunsets we worship, the books we read, the faces we love; the acts the world sees us perform, *need* not be the life; if I am a priest, yet my life need not be clerical and bounded by a stockade of gaiters. I live by divine law which made me; just as music exists not as sounds, but a star, so I exist as a free will and sense

and spirit, not as a person swathed in surplices or wearing strange hats; I do not give up my freedom, that is the point, I am not bound and perjured and a liar; nor need you be. At my worst moments, I see myself Archbishop and Poet Laureate, at my best I don't see myself at all, but merely God and other men and the world and my dear art. Do you see?

Practically, by the way; if you examine all existing, congregated churches, Wesleyans, Calvinists, etc., you will find none where spiritual freedom is so perfect as in the Church. My brain is whirling with my last Act, and I cannot write now; I have condensed my usual diffuseness.

To B.

RHUAL,
September 2, 1884.

I want to know quite definitely the precise points which "your superstition boggles at" in the formularies of the Church: what actual phrases you could not use as a priest without internal repulsion? I don't know what I believe: I don't want to believe more than I feel: but then I feel the beauty of anything: even of the *αὐτό κάκον*. I intend to be inconsistent and tie you down to logic: what is it in yourself that says No to any religion? Surely not

absence of faith, unless you still cling to miserable Mill: which I suspect you do in spite of yourself; there is in his dry barren wastes of exact prose a terrible fascination. Once know for yourself—nothing can teach it you—that matter is non-existent, that idealists are right, that spiritualism is right and I am unable to see what can keep you from turning priest or parson or God on your own account. You stop before such atoms in the sunbeams, and pore over them with microscopes of logic and unreason till they swell to fill the whole sunlight—there's enough dreadful night in the world without artificial twilight.

Do you think that you are where you are and what you are that you may "live alone"? naturally, not so: then, if not alone, with your brothers altruistically: i.e., on their terms: and the terms of most English folk are "Church and State": you believe perhaps as I do in "Love and Liberty," etc., but we must say of Love and Liberty "they are all atoms in the void" and bow before Church and State: because we are loving and free when we do so, because we are humiliating ourselves, because we are walking through life in a series of inward shudders with smiles on our faces: because we are going up to Jerusalem to the feast with Jesus, because we are "shaving our heads in Cenchreas for we have a vow" with Paul. Disgusting is it? well disgusting = unpleasant

to *our own* taste: I know my life must be greatly disgusting.

I want an answer.

I have written the last lines of my work: all I have done in the world of art is a horrible stack of poetastry and a play of 1,627 lines: but quite enough sins for seventeen. I have walked myself to death among the Welsh mountains and am perfectly happy: I have also begun every sentence of this letter with I. Are you resolved upon the London School Board? I think you would rather not bring Shelley there: haunt of ugliness and squalor, and coal smoke, and the minimum of beauty.

Am getting illegible.

If you ignore the English Church as an existing force in England, you must fail: if you recognize it where are you?

To B.

RHUAL,
September 9, 1884.

Has it ever struck you, dear brother, that you are very cruel to me? not that cruelty on your part can affect me at all, but from your point of view it must be harsh-looking. The ideal which I grasp at because it is so humble that it bears an air of puerile triviality, you elevate on the pure white pedestal of your

own aspiration, and label it as Liar, Jesuit, Insincere, Low, Mean, Deceitful: whereas in truth it is only Love. Why will you fling Articles, Gods, Trinities, Rituals in my path, and make me pay before each the toll of counterfeit assent?

Must I "lie" to you (I don't know the word) and say, I believe the dogma, or to the world, saying, "Quicunque vult"? Accepting your standard, your measure of moral definition, I will tell you that I am a liar and I am a hypocrite, that I take the smooth path to fat stalls, and court the fashionable appetite: that I am gloating over anticipated Passion Weeks, and hankering after beautiful altars and perfect vestments: you intend cruelty, and I confess to you what you long to wring from me.

But you are wrong, wrong and you are loved of me, and wrong in your thoughts. Myself know, I do not pose as a hero: as a man turned priest for others' good: but I know also that I am true. I tell you again, I see no means whereby the brotherhood of men in the whirling passion of life may be asserted, but by joining men's hands: by bringing all men into one fold under one shepherd: and that shepherd Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, and the brothers of Jesus. Ah, but I cannot do that: that means you say, the empire of Love and Freedom over a world regenerate by Love and Freedom: that means drowning with Shelley. Does it, my brother?

You may laugh: yet I think my part is not unworthy: you may trample upon your dragons of superstition, mean audacity towards the unutterable one: and men will, many of them, and (ah me) the holiest of them, applaud you: I contend with articles of faith, with my lying conscience, with canonries, with poor material Christians: my voice comes "choked with lawn sleeves" and caught away by incense and perfume: take your truth: you preach naked truth: I lie, that love may abound. Too hard for you, is it? you will not swear falsely, you will not lie? but I, your brother, will do that, for Jesus' sake, for yours and all men's.

But perhaps this is Jesuitry again? I still hanker after a band of devotees: I still am emulous of "the day's famous names": Scott Holland, Knox Little, Stanton, King, are my models? I lie so inveterately you don't know what I mean? Brother, perhaps that is not the least part of my burden.

Your last letter does not answer my objections: you say what I might say. I neither believe in the Trinity nor disbelieve: I neither believe in the Vice-regent of Christ nor disbelieve, I cannot understand, I love. "Lo here is God and there is God" true: everywhere: in conventicles and churches and open air: the whole mystery of life, and the deep holiness of identity is too great for me: why should we solve it? Ah the pity of it: the men and women that

walk the world at war, with want and woe beside them: all against all: and weeping Love wandering homeless. But if I, baring my head, say "I know nothing: I feel love: and God is Love: He is somewhere, being Love: and everywhere, being Love: and perhaps all things are very good, for I dare not think I know" then why may I not look around me and discover Atheists, Mormons, Parsees, Buddhists, Catholics and say "of all these which is best for my case when I must work?" and so saying not choose the Church of England, hoping out of Her means to feed the poor? "But you don't believe in Her doctrines: what she asserts, you deny: you are out of place if not worse": yes, all that is so: but then—can I stand up and say "I believe": or "I do not believe"? I do not know: I will make the best of it: were I to stand alone and preach aspirations of my own, the world would be aloof and the stars would ask me "Do you here know or believe?" Turn all ways: every way the same pathos of doubt and aversion: and we must do our best: the night cometh.

You cannot lie: you can love: but you cannot attain the sublimer heights among the night airs and grand stars, whither lying is your guide, hypocrisy your wings: you can love—you cannot lie. Lying, is it? or merely love in the dress of undisputing hope? Still

the old thought haunts me, clings about my mind: you don't know what I mean. Well you are free: the world I must preach to must with a great sum purchase this freedom.

Are not my lying and my Jesuitry the quintessence of Truth?

Yours in hope.

To A.

RHUAL,
September 14, 1884.

You must forgive my silence, if speech pleases better in this hollow prison vault of a world, where we fumble and grope in the dark to find the keys; death silences, and I have known death very near of late; my words to B. have been mere soliloquies I felt obliged to inflict.

I can hardly write anything now; my time in a house full of visitors is limited, tho' my mind is freer than usual by the intercourse with a dear friend and cousin.

But I must write if only to say that I am but too willing to congratulate you on the coming of a new member to your house folk; "how love is the only good i' the world."

And now having said all I can, I will merely utter the old cry I have so often uttered;

will you not perjure (what does that mean?) your life, that many may become free indeed?

Love—love towards one, one alone, one in the world; what is this but love for all, if you think rightly? when a yearning stirs within the spirit to become one with a high lonely star, to make two one, that unity may be the sole existence, then love of men and women is sprung to light out of dark hesitation; the single love is the myriad love—isn't it so?

Can you find Truth? nay, is there a Truth such as you seek? I think rather that the stress and play of life and emotion here is perfect in wisdom; "good Will somehow be the goal of ill; that's what all the blesséd evil's for"; ugliness, pain; these are the serene notes struck from the organ soul of God; nay, are God. To create beautiful things where poor ugliness was; to seal kisses where Society's Pariah-brand gloomed; is not this God? and you strive and battle after God, and do not win your desires. I tell you, be happy, for that is to know God; be sinful, for that is to feel God; be all things, for that is to be God. Don't think this is paradox, the antithesis of seventeen slight years; I tell you this is what you long to win; but you will not, nor would Jerusalem.

To B.

College,
September, 1884.

You will forgive the folly of words, where the heart only can speak? but last night there were stars, and a moon, and soft winds and airs, and love over all—and I want to thank you, however feebly. Angry? what is anger? I know love, and laughter, and pity, and interest —all these: but never anger.

To B.

College,
September 21, 1884.

Coming out of Chapel after an ecstasy of radical sacerdotalism from Linklater, the priest of our Portsea Mission, I must say something. The sermon suggested a new idea and striking: civilization, art periods, monarchies, centres of thought, pass away into darkness because they are disobedient to the science which requires bodies that would become live organisms to be quickened and then sustained from without by relation: i.e., the piteous efforts of humanity to be at one, to be able to love, to be tamed into unselfishness despite of themselves, must fail and have failed ceaselessly, because they

do not infuse into their work a portion of that divine æther and love which ruled the evolution of each one of their units. Mankind by nature (i.e., in Eden—vide Genesis) was harmonious: harmony was broken by discord, "that harmony might be prized": hence the social aims and propaganda of love, either red dabbled in blood or thin with ghostly dearth, fade away, pass into the past: but the great unity of Christianity is the return to that state wherein life was one orchestra of sympathies, near to the feet of God: or, before love met with ugliness. Am I clear? For the sermon was exceedingly arresting in its glimpses of early union between man and man and God.

That I could tell you one fragment of the rhythmic life-march that I listen to in moments of silence and hushed beauty: when the world and the nations and the powers and the princedoms and the sinners pass through the gates of perfect temples hand in hand, chaunting their Trisagion of Faith, Hope, Charity: and the greatest of these is Charity: for God is Charity: Charity which makes the pure saint bow to the dust before the sinner saying "Brother, love me, if thou canst for thou art lonely." Do you think my ears catch only the rustle of silk rochets, my eyes wish for the dazzle of scarlet hoods? if you do, you are yet in your sins.

Will you take the "Metaphysics of Agnos-

ticism " for your creed ? will you be good because it is so pleasant to be good ? will you be compassed with a great cloud of witnesses ? or will you rather love and so win a God indeed, and, when you say " God " you say " all that is, but not I."

When the Incarnation is helpful, I will preach it : when It alarms I will pass It by : when It disgusts I will deny It : wouldn't you, to help your brothers ? Shall you think I am enamoured of paradox being no true believer in anything ? think that : have I a right to bid you think otherwise ? you are you : I am I : we are not one, as men : but we are one as broken sculptures from the infinite glories of the house of life not made with hands, now seeking to be rebuilt without cement by you and the world and the *Nineteenth Century Review*.

" But truth is truth : you can't say one thing and then another " : dear brother, how strangely you limit truth : do you remember Desdemona's death-bed lie ? and do you shake your head over that truest of beautiful truths ? You had better give up persuading me : even though I see the men who might win a world to the arms of love passing by on the other side : even then I will try to do my best, while I live in the light : the night cometh, the night cometh.

Do you know the most awful utterance of

man since man was? it is part of a Psalm of a Hebrew king: "free among the dead." Just try to think over that: the franchise of death, the wandering wills of shadowland, the freedom of helplessness "free—among the dead." And you are free—among the dead: I (ah the conceit) am bound that the living may be made free. Yes: take your dead citizenship: yes: join Socrates, be one with Voltaire: I am bound on the cross with Jesus, with Naaman in the House of Rimmon, with Buddha beneath the Tree. Yes: take your freedom—among the dead, and leave us, for we are slaves.

Slaves: pass us by, waste no wine and oil: we are slaves, nay, I am a slave, for it seems I shall stand or bend down or lie down or writhe or die, alone, quite lonely: but what matter it, so my brothers win the enfranchisement of love, being made a "God-enfranchised soul"? Yes: free among the dead, free to flit shriekingly across the dusks and glooms of the twilight: free among the melting mists that flee away before the rising of the sun: I am a slave, who am bound in rusty fetters, whereby many are rejoiced.

Are you so very earnestly bent on cowardice, because you can't bolt a paradox which is only a truism?

To A.

College,
October 14, 1884.

You must forgive me for not writing lately; I have been so entirely occupied: in a letter writing controversy elsewhere, and editing the *Wykehamist:* every word of which I had to write except the camping business. Will you write me an article on any subject you like sometime? I feel as if I should remain quiet mentally now with my mind made up and my spirit satisfied: devoting myself to literature, wherein I intend to make presently a greater venture: I can't tell you in what way.

And now happiness does not seem treason to my suffering brothers: and life is friend to death and sin to purity: all things are new. In the interests of daily life this faith proves itself: I can endure depression, vulgarity, Philistia with calmness: absorption in metrical details and art systems does not appear merely dilettantism. And then, above all, there is the sense of sacrifice; sacrifice of personal freedom, personal irresponsibility: the Cross of Christ Jesus is a reality. I think you cannot live much without believing in the universality of holiness.

I cannot write much: every thought is swallowed up in quiet content, and inexpres-

sible looking forward. I simply have nothing to say. But write often even if I cannot always answer.

B.'s "In Memoriam" is very beautiful in thought and expression: the latter, very quaintly beautiful.

Tell me what you liked of my production? I ask as a self critic: I am hard at work on poetry just now with a hope of publication: conceit is coming fast upon me, with I think growing strength: enthusiasm for what I hold as my art flourishes now my eternal wants are asleep.

Tell B. I will write to him soon: but feel now constantly busied: you see as a senior Prefect, and Prefect of Chapel, and Editor of the *Wykehamist* and member of Mission Committee, etc., my time is well filled.

I have decided selfishly not to go up to Oxford next October but the year after: I am right.

I came back wonderfully strong, though my eyes are painful: I take care of myself.

To A.

COLLEGE,
October 19, 1884.

I can perfectly imagine—indeed almost feel from his letters—what you say of B., but whilst

I would wish it were not so, still, since it is there, surely it almost constitutes a charm? the apparent taint of worldliness that clings about him at times, complicates his character delightfully, adding the element of entire surprise. I know this can't be a real comfort, yet from the Browning point of view, it is satisfactory enough.

You will come down at Christmas to Concert and bring him? we are singing Mendelssohn's divine "Lauda Sion"; some passages realize God; notably a grand outburst, "He sitteth between the cherubim, be the people never so unquiet"; each practice of it is to me a fresh entry to heaven.

I am actually writing out with an attempt at legibility my play "Miserabilia" to offer to Kegan Paul; I know it is immature, unfit for publication; but I want to see how it would strike a publisher; how it would be rejected, in what terms: don't laugh at me.

Have you read the series of "School Board Idylls" appearing in the *Pall Mall*? I can understand B.'s ambitions, if they are true.

The autumn is beautiful here with the richest gold on the trees, and mild melancholy air; and I walk out by the river, perfectly happy.

Will post this—as it is—called away to Fearon.

To C.

COLLEGE,
October 22, 1884.

Before proceeding to other topics I congratulate you on your Rugby distinctions, of which I was aware, tho' I never wrote at the time. Truly such inducements to more frequent correspondence as I gave you were slight enough: a few worthless studies in metre, jejune and juvenile are hardly the foundations of friendship: though I meant them well. I have been so much occupied that I could not (I did try to find time) manage to write to you: and now, as Editor of the *Wykehamist*, Prefect of Chapel, and sundry other unintelligibilities, I am scarcely more master of my own time.

I will get rid of a confession: don't laugh: I am writing out a tragedy of mine for Kegan Paul to reject: I am about to plunge into the deep waters of printer's ink and the hell of printers' devils: merely to experience analytically an ignominious rejection of my masterpiece: oblige me by not laughing: I'll let you smile. Voilà!

I am told by indiscriminating friends that my handwriting is execrable: do you think so?

The *Wykehamist*, whose destinies I now control, is a production stereotyped by the touch of the ages: it eschews literature, abhors origin-

ality, hates poetry: and Winchester loves to have it so. I can't alter it at once, though my leading articles avoid the usual type. Will you, if you care or have time, give me an article or poem or letter on any subject not absolutely beyond the intelligence of Wykehamists, and not quite unconnected with them? but don't trouble.

I think I enjoy the years more here dating from this September: B. clamours for only one year, but I can't tear myself away from a place I love so well, and where I am—excuse egoism—some kind of influence.

Winchester has, perhaps, the advantage over Rugby of having antiquity and beauty in the midst of Philistia: of being a living spirit to commune with, in spite of Wykehamists. I will write when I can: you know I would if I could.

Do you know at all anyone here? I almost hope not, for your sake.

Forgive illegibility and egoism.

To C.

THE COLLEGE,
November, 1884.

I have been guilty of great discourtesy, no less than of breach of friendship, in a silence of weeks: but I am fully occupied.

Imprimis, I will impart to you an episode, which may be fitly reckoned an important era in life: I have sent my MSS. in the shape of a tragedy of 1,900 lines to a publisher: and he (Kegan Paul) writes thus: "I would reject Shelley's "Cenci," were he to offer it me as you offer your work, at my risk." He remarks that "no one reads poetry now: and whilst I, as an individual, accept, as a tradesman I am forced to decline." That is success for a seventeen-year old poetaster: and it is also a far better thing, an incentive to work, to force the public into appreciation of poetry.

I send you two *Wykehamists* and make two remarks:

1. Its editor, my publisher supplies me with any number gratis: so that any account on your part is purely superfluous.

2. It is primarily a record of facts, etc., not a literary journal: wherefore don't expect any article of interest from it.

Cambridge Wykehamists are not a striking set: Norris may be worth knowing.

Are you engaged in much literary work? or how do you expend your energies? personally, I find literature an unfailing panacea against the noisome pestilences of Philistia: which is an attractive region to study for those in paradise, if not for captives in the Temple of Dagon.

I have been visiting lately the School Mission at Portsmouth: and such a visit is more sug-

gestive than a year's dull routine: the power of the Church over chaos is striking: how it affects civilization is another matter. But these opportunities are very real.

To C.

THE COLLEGE,
November, 1884.

I this morning received a letter I wrote you with the *Wykehamist* from the pleasant town of Birmingham: whither in an absent state I had sent it: so I send it to you a little out of date. You have had A. up at Cambridge: he seems delighted with it and you all. I have no time of my own just now, with exams., etc., in prospect: but don't let that prevent your writing.

Have you ever seen Winchester? if not, I think it is worth your while to see it: could you not come down to the School Concert at the end of this term, i.e., the Monday before Christmas? you'd hear not altogether bad music.

I am longing for the 21st, as a young lady for her first ball, or a lover for his wedding: and from reports of it, "Ferishtah's Fancies" seem likely to be a fit crown of seventy years' glories.

I am due in Chapel—will try to write again.

To B.

THE COLLEGE,
WINCHESTER,
November, 1884.

I know—I have been silent, forgetful of common duties: and don't blame me, who have no control over my time.

I sent a play of mine to Kegan Paul lately: he personally wrote back most kindly:—"were Shelley to offer me the "Cenci" at my risk, I would refuse": my play he approved: the man of business said poetry was unread by the public, least of all dramas: so I must devote myself to dramas with my whole heart: I think I can do a little in that way.

C. must be a pleasant spirit in this world: has written me quite delightful letters which I have answered at intervals.

Have you heard Ruskin? he reads melancholy.

I have been at Landport, Portsmouth, last Sunday, among the School Mission: a strange experience: Sunday classes, talks with boys of 18, etc.: ritualistic adorabilities: clubs, vespers, teas, all deliciously real: a veritable revelation of real work.

Rossetti's Shelley 3 vols. I have just acquired: a perfect work in spirit, and fascinating: I won't tell you one thought which struck me

in one passage of the *Memoir:* for it may be blasphemy.

When I don't write, don't accuse me: I have no morals, and never realize what such faults mean: I love you, I think you know: and let that stand against social shortcomings.

I would give immortality to be a music-god: to be lord of the world's pulse and nerve and spirit: aye me, I can only strive after words, with the obstacles of frivolous publics and courteously appreciative but at the same time forbidding publishers—aye me. "Autumn wins you rest": and the air is keen and warm and fresh as of a deserted valley in Heaven: and I live in it happily.

Tell A. that I literally have not time *now* to write much: you don't believe me, but it is so.

I never told you how I like "In Memoriam": the art of it is fascinating even beyond the sense. Shelley is all: go where you will, the Godhead of Shelley is all: the possession of his work is Heaven, and assurance of it: Shelley did not die, not die: he is alive and I shall see him as he is, and cling to him, be one with him: he and Jesus are not dead, you know it: haven't they left us their divinity?

To A.

College,
December 1, 1884.

I don't know whom I speak to now, don't know anything but that I love and love and love and would die for love of you, who are not you, but all the brothers of all worlds. I seem unresponsive and cold and inattentive, but don't think ill of me; for I do love you all, who are not so distant in spirit that silence can be ominous to you. And now I have nothing to tell you at all; only I have heard the divinest music of this and all other spheres, Chopin's Marche Funèbre and it carried me high away from the earth into ecstacy, where you and all my enemies and friends were part of myself and God: I can't speak lightly of God.

Oh, how ineffably mean are the world's and the hour's petty estimates!—and yet they infect us. But the spirit of love is in all and transmutes clay into air and stars—the clay and dust of daily ugliness and commonplace. Love; don't you know the meaning of universal love the passion which is only reason and the mind of God, so unintelligible and infinite? and I am not writing now but an infinite impulse of love which throbs through me to the torturing beautiful harmonies of Chopin's Death Chaunt. I am mad, and out of myself; myself is cold,

perhaps, and undemonstrative; but you will pardon this? be secure in the thought that for me to cease from love is simply an awful death where the sweetness of death is not, but merely the agony of annihilation.

Do you doubt me? but I don't care, for the world is mine for me to love and you are of this world of mine.

Write when you like; I don't want your letters, though I love them; for perfect love cast out fear long ago, and now lives by itself.

To C.

College,
December 9, 1884.

I had so completely counted upon seeing you for a few hours here, that I never thought it possible you would have to give it up: I am so sorry.

You must forgive me for only writing just these few words, because exams. are heavy upon me day and night, and I have no time for anything.

Yes, I have been reading Swinburne too, and always with unspeakable rapture: and the divinest words of him are the "Cradle Songs"—though possibly you won't understand that. But I have been reading "Ferishtah," and lost in the wonder and exaltation of it: the first

lyric is almost his supreme utterance for years past. B.'s poem I have been reading, and so far as I catch the feeling, the personal part of it, admire intensely: but I feel about his poetry, regarded as an art, that the intensity of the thought and the sense of morality, weaken the artistic side: that he, like poor Clough, mars his work with the sense of a lesson, a moral, a truth: whereas poetry has no relation to morality nor theology nor theosophy, but is for itself: one verse of the "Blessed Damozel" is to me worth the whole of "Dipsychus," do you feel that? Matthew Arnold writes no poetry now, and wrote much false poetry, by this failure to define the working of art.

Have you got the *Wykehamist*? an amusing instance of the failure to grasp the meaning of poetry is given me by the public criticisms on the verse therein contained, some mine, some Oxford friends: all of the same unreal stamp, all with some element of strangeness, all with art as their principle: the public here is laughing consumedly—so am I. But B.'s book is a true poem. Do you know Robert Buchanan's poetry?

Must turn to the plague at Athens—*eheu*.

To B.

RHUAL,
December 23, 1884.

I have much that I should like to say to you, but I cannot at all. Your flowers were whole worlds of delight to me all the night—and Mrs. Richardson then had them—and I thank you in silence, as my way is. Speech is to me almost impossible together with bodily presence —speech is weak and shamefaced—but in absence words are all things. *Vicisti et vivimus*—conquered, yet alive—is our motto—from an old legend of the Scotch border when we were a clan of Johnstones—I like it, for it means so much in different ways.

I hardly know what my movements will be now—all is unsettled here: at least I am resting, and trying to write poetry. C.'s face is simply haunting: from one glance at its copy, I remember each portion of it, each expression of eyes and mouth—I must see him some day.

Through all the changes and chances of life I think one must be happy, with men and nature round one: I have passed through London and now write looking over wild Welsh hills—and my mind is the same, always full of beautiful happiness—life is very worth living, and death leads to another.

To C.

RHUAL,
December 24, 1884.

Thanks for the sight again of your handwriting. How I wish I was with you at Tenby, a place which is almost an ideal of my first memories: I was there for a year at the age of five and again at the age of nine: and to this day St. Catherine's Rock, Lundy, etc., are a kind of fairy dream. As you see, I am in the wilds of Wales, in frost and snow: mainly reading, and trying to write: another play, if possible: but I can't get it clear in my head. If only you could have come to Winchester: I think you would have liked the place, if not the people. But you must come in the summer, when nothing on earth is more beautiful than the wide gray downs panting under a burning sky.

A. may be coming to stay with me soon, to make the acquaintance of my people—I don't altogether know the probable result.

The sea is the most wonderful thing in this world—I remember a wreck off Lundy, years ago, and the life-boat, and a great storm at midnight—and myself, a terrified child, at the window, watching it all as a play or a poem of Victor Hugo—had I known Hugo then.

Write to me when you feel inclined—you

don't know the delight of letters from a friend, even when we have never met—a strange fascination in the idea: but I want your "likeness" and must have it—pardon my importunacy. Christmas in Wales is so unfamiliar to me, someway: but I always love the idea of Christmas, tho' not as the Xtians about me. "Peace on Earth, goodwill" is the best definition of Brotherhood of Shelley's type. Write.

To A.

RHUAL,
December 26, 1884.

What a glorious man Thomson was, or is; his poem on Shelley is the most Shelleyan thing I know. I cannot thank you enough for the book, doubly sacred.

To C.

RHUAL,
29.12.84.

It seems so altogether strange, all this unconventional friendship of strangers, and the something higher than friendship crowning our friendship. I can imagine no more beautiful happiness than to walk with you by the sea in the winter and the cold fresh breath of wind and waves: yet it was merely a fancy of love-

liness, beyond my power to realize in act now: we shall see each other some day, though not at Tenby. I am waiting for your "graven image" in impatience: pardon me the confession—it is a "graven image" that I must worship, having but once glanced at it: you see, I can say in absence what your presence might check. And you too ask me for my image: which does not exist, except at the age of ten or thereabouts: well, when it has an existence, which will be in a few weeks, I will send it to you: but it will be absolutely devoid of attractiveness. My miserable play is now being copied into legible MS. by the loving labour of a cousin, the only member of my family to whom I can really disclose myself: when it is ready, I shall send it the round of the Publishers: by the time it returns to me like Noah's dove, my self-conceit will, let us hope, have been disillusioned.

A. comes to us on the second for a few days: which will be a break upon the monotony of spiritual solitude.

You must come to Winchester some day, and alone: besides the beautiful divinity of the place, I think Winchester should be our place of meeting—when you can, do come: though Cambridge and Tenby are alike far away.

Have you anywhere in your possession some infinitely valueless rhymes of mine, which I

cruelly foisted upon you, the unknown editor of a few months ago? if so, don't keep them —in the light of somewhat increased powers of self criticism, if not of execution, they show so worthless that they cannot really be an integral part of me. Let me enjoy something of the work of your hands, whether poetry of words or design: I shall regard it as a sign that after all you are not merely attracted by the unreal portraits of me my friends may have given you, nor merely are studying me with interest: but that you can accept somewhat of me for its own sake so far as you can see it.

I hardly know why I am writing this way: perhaps it comes from long staring out at great soft ridges of misty hills, with gray clouds about them, and flashes of white snow upon them: a sense of great melancholy indifference to the world and its life: I don't know.

Will you, when you write to me, analyse your conception of B. as a human soul? I will not try to describe my sensations—for they are sensations more than ideas—of him: but he is at least very strange, and, though lovable to the uttermost, at times almost unacceptable.

Do you know in your own mind, or heart, what your after life is to be? and have you ever thought it possible that you should become a priest, as I hope to become? Is there not at Tenby a headland or a cape called Gilter

or Gilder Point? I have a dim memory of it as the limit of a childish walk starting from St. Katherine's Rock: and it is quite clear to me still in imagination.

> Oh, to be at Tenby
> Now that you are there!

but I can't. Vale.

To B.

RHUAL,
January, 1885.

I am wearing your Cross and you have my thanks for it. That you have not heard from me again is not to be attributed to carelessness but to an entire want of time. The world is very amusing. A. is with us tasting the quality of Philistia: he rather seems to endure it, and reproaches me with intentional cruelty towards my people—a strange side of the matter. C. has been most kind in the way of letters, and we think we know each other, however absurd a supposition for two human souls. At least he does not appear cold: nor offensively hysterical: as men are apt to show themselves.

Why is it that men would be intolerably dull without religion to discuss? you see, religion is the ideal platitude in personal inter-

course: and it sickens me inexpressibly. There is more delight in the structure of a sonnet or villanelle, the cadence of a verse, than in heavy analysis of a foggy soul: Rossetti is the infinite Hyperion, and Clough an ineffable Satyr with the music of Beddoes' "frog-voice."

It is hard to be natural, and to know oneself: I am never certain that I don't hate my friends: if I did there would be no difference from loving them: things are so inconceivably little. Silence is the best speech: silence is an existence but speech an impotence and a mockery.

I verily believe that the dearth of all high literature and the sterility of all social happiness is due to the cursed spirit of religious gossip, the breath of rotten philosophies. Shelley whom we worship was content with love for his God, faith and hope for his politics: he read Shakespeare, and cared nothing for Herbert Spencer: the outcome, pure divinity of literature. But you wretched pseudo Athenians babble over your Clough and your religion, and would "boggle at" the first canto of the *Faery Queen*.

I won't continue: I feel angry and rude.

To C.

College,
January, 1885.

Your last letter reached me at A.'s where I have spent the last few days before coming

back to the home of my heart. And now I feel far too weary with wayfaring to write connectedly. Meanwhile you are back at Cambridge: and I wait and long for your visible appearing, immediately in image: and love only knows when in reality. I think I shall not die yet—that I shall waste on into old age and memories of a beautiful life: for life is meaningless without beauty, and everything is or becomes at need, beautiful.

You will forgive this wearisomeness of mine: I am not writing you a letter, merely saying things. Chiefly that parting and absence are the bitterest of experiences: that to be away from the sphere and hourly contact of one whom we love is a sword that pierces to the death of the body and the utter pain of the soul: and you, whose face alone I know, and others whom you do not know—all these I have not with me, or have left elsewhere: and I want to speak or sing and die rather than know that these are in a strange land where strangers to me love them: for love is sinful even to the sin of jealousy. "This unintelligible world" and we in the midst of it.

Write to me, speak to me anyhow: and let me have your face and features with me.

To C.

January, 1885.

I am writing to you face to face at last, in sight of you, to you: you must imagine my gratitude. I am grateful. As to myself, I have not forgotten my promise: but the photographer declines to do anything until the sun shines, being an ancient and conservative man: at present and, to all appearances, for ever, the sun is dead behind gray clouds. But I will send myself, though I don't know when. I hardly know now what to say to you: words are very easy things, and not very expressive.

Why is B. in a state of meaningless wrath and sorrow against me? for his last letters are entirely unfathomable—he was merely mystic and maudlin alternately: and now I seem to have lost my self-complacency, at the thought of it. But I think nothing is wrong.

How work wastes life: the scholarship and pedantry and dustiness of learning are strangely cramping to the imagination: a chapter of philology unfits me by the blank horror of it to write a line of verse for a week. Don't be annoyed or worse if I don't write often: I am not too well in body just now and find an effort where there should be none.

You cannot understand the extent of your

gift of yourself—to me it means worlds of memory and association: I can turn to you now as to a Madonna. But you will write when you can: a word, as a look from passing eyes in the street, is a wealth of love to be stored up: and the more I live and the more nearly I know the few true friends I love, the more precious becomes the gift of any least word. To one living alone, the striking of a single chord of music is a real part of Heaven. Don't think me cold, if I don't write.

To B.

January, 1885.

Why is it that you are always restless as to other people's states of mind, always imagining strange emotions for them? From your letter I gather that you are angry and resentful with me: or that you suppose me to be so with you: and so I am to atone for your forcible imagination by desisting to wear a beautiful gift of you to me: and you are entirely amusing in every way. Because I do not write, or do not seem to sympathize, or do not share your emotions—hinc illae lachrimae: unreasonably. Yet, all manifestation of nature and human souls at work is pleasing: you are always the same to me: I will always love your Ich—interpret as you may. Pardon me my neglect

in retaining "To my brethren": you know I will send it you: but it is so far mine that I forget its real ownership: I will send to-morrow. Your character is a thing that cannot suffer in my eyes: it may change and shift and develop: so I can study it and be happy with it and be emotional at the same time. Let me know what you mean: and, if you truly feel unable to care about me—you won't be the first or last—then I shall be impassive as before: "nothing in Heaven can be Greater than pain."

Do you comprehend me? you and A. and C. —oh, you can never really leave me or like me: I can leave you and love you. Is this over much oracular? at least it is truth.

If you are not at peace with me and all men "look up in perfect silence at the stars." Yours whether I will or no.

To A.

THE COLLEGE,
February 8, 1885.

I have not written to you for years, I think: but you know I am lazy at home and busy here—and letters fall to the ground.

Your Aunt was very kind and very averse to my whole attitude of mind—and delighted me by denouncing "you young men who are

full of doing good to others and none to yourself." But she was extremely suggestive—if that doesn't sound patronizing.

I have heard from B. and he was full of R. whom he was ecstatic over: otherwise he was oracular and rather suspicious. But C. I seem to know more and more: his photo I never have out of my sight, through sheer delight in its beauty. Winchester is all as usual, and I am settled down to work. I have shouted myself hoarse in Debating Society in denouncing vivisection, alone, against a horde of flippantly clever utilitarian sciolists who "prated of humanity" and the value of life. The Second Master last Sunday preached us a splendid sermon, full of really striking thought, perfect Buddhism and high spirituality: a glorious sermon, delivered almost as well. To-night Spooner of New College, with whom I dine at Fearon's. Money-Kyrle is my colleague in the editorship, at my special request: he is quite surprisingly and pleasingly capable. As you see, faith is in my family a large element of belief: my father with his "omnipotent," my mother with her churchism—see what faith is. I feel rather bitter in temper, as though selfishness was really more strong than love: it never is. But I seem lonely, even with the many I love, you and those whom you know in common with me, and a few you don't know—lonely altogether by my own fault. My nature

is not deeply sympathetic, but deeply impressionable. I am hard. Forgive my egoism: and write sometimes.

Extract from a Sermon by the Rev. G. Richardson in Winchester College Chapel.

February 1, 1885.

"We have then a spiritual body as well as a natural body, and it is this spiritual body which has been created in the image of God. This image can be marred and defaced, and it also can be renewed and purified. It is in our keeping, yea it is our very selves, and all the deeds done in the natural body act upon it towards the improvement or destruction of the Divine likeness. We know that even our natural body is changed and in that change bears the record of deeds done in the body. The record of a life of self-indulgence or sensuality is most surely and indelibly stamped on every feature of the mortal body; and equally so is the life of self-denial and purity and goodness. If then this be the case with the unplastic organism of our natural body, what may we not expect with regard to our spiritual body. "Nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad;" and is it not more than probable that we are all moulding day by day

our spiritual bodies into an eternal record of our every thought and word and deed; so that when we put off our mortal garment we shall come into the presence of our Maker with our spiritual body either still bearing the Divine likeness cleansed and beautified by the spiritual blood of the Lamb, or else with that image made hideous and horrible by a life of sin and defilement. This is no new thought: it has long ago been pointed out that every word we speak and every thought we think causes pulsations and motions which are sent thro' the universe, so that if we had the power to follow and detect their effects, every particle of existing matter would be seen a register of every act that was ever done, of every word which was ever spoken. It is then no unnatural supposition to believe that we may be our own recording angels and that we are actually making our spiritual bodies fit for their proper place in the unseen world of spirits, either weaving the wedding garment to be a guest of the great King, or preparing for the outer darkness where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

If we were to strive to realize this it might help us to keep more in the narrow path of rectitude and duty. In our weakness we often sin hoping for forgiveness in the very act, but we might be saved from the sin were we to remember that tho' we may be forgiven, the

stain can never be blotted out, the sin can never be unsinned, the impress will be left on our spiritual bodies for ever. Let us then struggle to keep these in the image in which they were created, ever looking to Him who is the perfect image of his Father, resting on Him and being renewed by His blood from all the dark spots which disfigure our spiritual body."

To B.

March 9, 1885.

Your Shelley photo I knew without possessing: in my eyes it has greater charm than the engraved portraits. Thank you. As I thought, a large portrait of any kind is not attainable: one must remain without—though it is hard. The Rossetti portrait after Stothard is undoubtedly preferable to Miss Cameron's in Buxton-Forman—worlds more beautiful to me: but association with Stothard of Shelley is heartrending to a lover of Blake. Your photograph has the most personal expression of any presentments of Shelley known to me.

F. appears to have set the world or microcosm of Oxford in an uproar—is he any way worth notice? he displays all the symptoms of Protestantism run mad and hydrophobic—as Q. in another extreme. You Oxford people don't strike me as very sane on most points:

you are morbidly self-conscious and not over-civilized: and largely Philistine. At least, you cannot endure passive existence and enjoyment. Is Farrar saying things worth hearing? beyond "Eternal Hope," I have an æsthetic dislike to him—too much early Christian martyr about him.

I am very much occupied with work of multifarious nature, so can write very seldom. Let me hear from you whenever you feel inclined.

With more thanks.

To A.

College,
March 15, 1885.

I am not now writing at any length: but merely a few words to satisfy your rapacity. Imprimis, the Convocation catastrophe has depressed me: your public mind—if you have one—is rotten. I am revelling in Pater's book: full of the most perfect literary quality, and infinitely wise and true and beautiful.

I have not thanked you for your flowers, *molte grazie.*

I was at St. John's lately and heard the Daker on almsgiving—not even his usual spiritual irony, but rather a stinging satire throughout, delivered in his most contemptuous voice: it was of M. Arnold's and Swinburne's

finest quality in righteous scorn. *Hélas*, how terrible it is γηράσκειν. I am eighteen years to-day, I wish I were ten years younger: do you know anything of a leading pessimist German philosopher, by name von Hartmann? his final solution is instantaneous suicide of the race by an act prompted by pure reason, attained after a period of education. Whitman is individual, yes, but so is God, and all of us are individual: the supreme aim is to individualize the universe into a myriad unity of individuals: see Blake, whom study well.

The *Wykehamist* is none of my work this time. I will write more when I have time—but I have work, and with me it must be done, sorely against the grain.

To B.

March, 1885.

Merely a word of salutation and answer. Since you really do expect me in your kindness, I declare myself ready indeed to come to you. I expect C.— heard from him, to my delight, this morning. He has a photo of me, which is not unlike—but rather petulant and scornful—anything but my humble toleration. I have not thanked you for the Song—I do thank you. Don't look for letters—I am not up to them.

To A.

April 6, 1885.

I have for months, I think, disregarded you entirely, in spite of my own conscience and your protests: and now I am making slight amends. Yes, I am anticipating the being with you on the 18th.

Shortly after you had left Winchester with H. I heard from him: a most kindly letter written with the same affection and the same beautiful caligraphy that all you people affect: and I answered him, though so singularly destitute of both these good qualities. At present I am recovering from the effects of experiencing the lovely Passion Week in Mold, in a cold, shivering air, with no smallest savour of beautiful Catholicism to make the divinity of the Passion a delight: dull, cheerless routine of unimpassioned, uninspired services; no light and colour and solemnity of ritual: and my soul is too weak to live without these. You are, I think, at Winchester, the beautiful city whom I never love so well as when I am in Mold. I am half happy here with a careful selection of treasures in the way of literature: I have with me Blake, Christina Rossetti, Walt Whitman, a little beautiful modern minor poetry (notably one O'Shaughnessy, unknown, I should guess, to you), *Belinda*, by Rhoda Broughton: and

the perfection of beautiful literature, Pater's *Marius:* a revelation of wonderful beauty and delight: a book to love and worship: a good book. So I find life pleasant but for this chilly April: and I am writing little songs, etc., as a relief from the pressures of school work. The future never is a thing that I like to speculate about: life for the moment seems right now, the closer that I approach to days of decision: I simply hate the days for flying past so speedily. When the endless region of faith and doubt is once entered, life becomes weary of itself: and to remain without that land, contented with the colours of a rainbow and a curtain, the sound of a storm and a sonata, appears the higher, more dignified way. But life is very difficult always and everyway. And this philosophy or want of it is catholic: it allows me to delight in the irreverent cleverness of Orange and the boisterous indifference of—well, my brother. And, as you see, it permits me to hold monologues by way of writing letters. Perhaps you know better than I what may be the reason: but I find letter writing impossible now: assuredly not for the simple reason of "nothing to say": nor from indifference: is it a prosaic and gross laziness?

I don't know where you are staying: write before the 18th.

To C.

24.4.85.

Don't think I have forgotten you, for I have never forgotten you: but I have sinned by silence: you will forgive me.

I have been at Oxford, in a pure ecstasy of delight at the communion of Saints there vouchsafed. I will write to-morrow: but don't forget me. I have been photographed, and will send myself when ready.

To B.

April, 1885.

Your handwriting again comes to console me, who am never above consolation despite my Epicurean sloth: at last. And I was made supremely happy yesterday with a letter from C. utterly full of loving-kindness—and the sun is shining brightly, if somewhat coldly. You were very good to me at Oxford: and marvellously refused to be frozen and chilled by the iciness of my calm self-sufficing—for which I thank you. As for "Words of Parting" written in roundel form and with the peculiar melancholy grace of youthful meditation—I read them now for the first time—can tell you nothing of them, except I can feel sympathy with their tone: and I have an unverifiable kind of

certainty that you are yourself the author—quae si ita sint, the remainder will be verily welcome—or if you still maintain the attitude of ignorance, the specimen I have is enough to create a desire to know the whole—there is nothing on earth—perhaps not even music, not even painting—of equal divinity with a single line of pure word-music, a single thought caught from passing emotions and changing aspects, and fashioned into the beauty of a phrase—there is nothing equally sovereign with poetry. All things must be everlastingly right, and so the worlds are ordered by the law of unchecked license, which sees and has no bounds: life is justified by its every possibility of action or negation—that is all. Why do I take delight in the coarsest expressions of life, and also take delight in the colourless purities and statuesque innocence of a moral law and a mild instinct? why whilst with you all lately have I never heard one word repulsive to my humanity? wonder and laughter and appreciation and enthusiasm and disbelief—all these are natural, but never the cold air of a shuddering superiority, never the sweet contempt of an instructive pity. A. inwardly wails over me: "quantum mutatus!" but no, not changed from a lofty pedestal of aspiration to the vulgar level of cowardly acquiescence: rather the same to the end, shifting and multifariously tolerant. Is there this higher life men talk of, is there this

lower they deprecate so blatantly? I thought Jesus put that lie to flight. In struggle and hard contest and opposing ways, where is your light unless it be in the love of all things human and inhuman? love is a reality, after all: at least it is possible and always beautiful. I may yet one day in the future before me, waste away in the ecstatic agony of aspiration and self-denial: I may yet writhe away to the outer darkness on the shuddering horror of a passion-consumed body: meanwhile I am alive in the summer heat and flowers and can laugh at the prospect of either melodrama. Does this preclude seriousness and *Ernsthaft* generally? well, I find that a moral *laissez faire*, combined with a practical working love and affection or tolerance of my brothers, makes my life not ignoble in my sight. I will grant you sin and the blessedness of piety and the superior thrill of self-satisfaction arising therefrom: what then? these things may be, but I also see such other matters as misery and Philistinism and hypocrisy and content—and all these varieties become mingled again into the coloured world I live in—I cannot distinguish except by an uncongenial effort of analysis. Perhaps this is an unscientific unexact labyrinth of verbal plausibilities? very likely you are right: again, what of that? my object is to live as I see life possible: not to set up theories. I hate a settled opinion on matters

which seem to me to exist only to be debated. That Catullus is the truest Roman poet: that Knox Little is the greatest English orator: that Chopin's Funeral March is higher than the Eroica March: these definite views I hold and will defend: but that it is wrong to be immoral, wrong to be infidel, wrong to be insincere—the very words have no meaning to me—I know what is meant by them—but that meaning is meaningless to me—my emotions refuse to answer such platitudes, paradoxes, truths, lies, theses, axioms—call them what you will. None the more do I say that it is right to speak the truth, to go to church, to refrain from adultery: equally here I do not know what to say to these collocations of words. Shallow and low and unoriginal—oh yes, if you will. Have I bored you enough with my apologia? forgive me: I have been reading Blake—always an emotional rapture, and Blake has a strong common-sense—which may have proved infectious. Every new specimen of the potter's power over the clay of the world impels me to my belief: the watching of a human face with its strange power of impressing you as a sacred and mysterious shrine of hidden and self-contained passions: the mere act of hearing a voice, observing a gesture, feeling a form not your own near you: the thought that there are others like yourself, if you could but act upon that knowledge: all this is the

proof and sign of the faith to which I think my practice and conduct clung before my senses and mind were impressed with its very truth. I consider now, writing—thank God—alone, how many faces I have known of late, and how much each face has shown me. Apart from these esoteric, rhapsodical aspects of my late visit, I think of O., H., T., and so on all practically unknown to me before: and then what a rush of memory and suggestion! what a strange vision of casual thoughts and sensations! and that not from any high moments of elevation, from no high-strung impulses: merely from an hour's random talk, a breakfast, a stroll, a Chapel service, and thus a thousand little things tend to the same end: I know because I feel, that these objects are now a part of me, actual and interwoven. So life becomes a liturgy sung to the Gods of our most beautiful imagination. You now—do you think that you are merely a friend whom I have talked with, walked with, written to, experienced? oh no, not that: you are closer than that, you are a thought of love and hours of memory and a part of my life: and so our union is closer than our personal intercourse could make it. This may have a cold repulsive side to it in your eyes: it may not sound like the loves of historical lovers, nor the companionship of historical friends: but it is absolutely literal and exact. True, your worst hatred and con-

tempt poured upon me could not alter my sensations towards you: they would merely vary them in a new direction: but do you not see a transcendant possibility of faithful brotherhood and love in that creed? Surely, whilst we live our hours, let us be at peace: for there is peace in the tumultuous thunder of antiphonal music, and the supremacy of rapturous peace in the glories of a calm summer morning and quiet heat: no peace in Exeter Hall, no peace in the Principles of Political Economy, none in the pity of false Christians. Are you still for morality and convention? then my love, such as it is to you, will merely change form a little: for you will still be the same, still a separate and unknowable personality, as we are all separate and unknowable. A "damned nuisance" is a bad definition of life: Heine is nearer the facts with his definition of his poetry: so, applying that to life, I think of life as "a divine plaything." Quaint, the thought that I don't know, nor care to know, whence my life has reached me—and why I can write of myself as an entity apart from my life. Strange and laughable, these stray thoughts: not real agonies of earnest endeavour, but fragments of curious music, experiments in Roccoco metres: curious work of fancy—suggesting John of Patmos and Jerusalem, Lucian, Swedenborg: and therefore pleasant and profitable: meanwhile, perhaps

I have a headache or can help a brother: a practical solution of these cases is more within my scope. But this is old and natural enough.

If you were to die soon, what should I experience, what sensation? well, besides the common and pathetic kind of physical shock, would not all the past year or so become changed to me, and the colour of the future shaded curiously? old trains of ideas, remembrances, and associations would flock about me—it would drift into a Rossettian Sonnet—and fly across the summer light and mingle with organ tones and flash from gleaming streams and sigh up from flowers: all the air would become a melancholy which would cling and melt and hang: and at last always I should keep the sense of loss and a pure delight of real sorrow: a phrase in a book, a sudden aspect of the sky, might represent a part of your impressions upon me now: and you would live for me so, I should be enriched by the pity of it. Ah, do you think this an affectation, or a cruelty? to me it has a beautiful force and persistence. And when I die, even then the same pleasure of impression will be with me: for all else is uncertain. My Catholic Saints and seraphs tell me this, and I knew it before I knew them: Browning, Blake, Swinburne, Rossetti, Hugo, Whitman, Pater, Catullus, Chopin, and so many more: all pass through the world with holy indifference and tolerant favour on their lips, the sun of

Righteousness in their eyes, for the healing of the nations. Believe me capable of what you will: suspect me, distrust me, despise me (an echo from afar of Hugo and Joriane): but never hate me, never cast me away. You don't know how far I am insincere, rhetorical, hollow, dull, affected, shallow: and you don't know how far I am simple and actual. At least my love is a strangely persistent passion, I am very thankful to you all for your kindness: according to my lights—that is inevitable. My work this term is of especial importance to me from a gross and practical point of view: so don't look for many letters. I feel an impulse to recite a creed this evening. Will you respond an Amen?

My love to any who may be affected by it and always to you.

To A.

COLLEGE,
April 24, 1885.

Having at last settled down to the life which at last seems to me the peculiar state God has been pleased to call me to—the life of placid irritation and fascinating isolation—I can write from a natural attitude. Verily, there are many things ready for the saying: as you know by experience I have never been externally emotional nor receptive—I slip away into cold

conceit or dull passivity. But I have certainly reason to be emotional now: *me voilà* in Philistia, and behind me is the kindly light of Israel. I am as grateful as my nature allows to you all: I know by the personal standard of my impressions that I have been unusually happy with you—I gave you no reason for thinking so: but *ça va.* The return to this lonely haunt of dullness is a positive discomfort, only capable of yielding the delight of enforced contrast: well, I thank you all.

There are now ten names at Oxford which in various degrees and manners are memorable to me: they have entwined themselves with strange thoughts and beautiful faces and holy books: a real addition to my sensuous-perceptive memory-power (German) has been given by the experiences of a few days. Pessimism is a glorious spell, if it has made me think the world as good for a monent as it could be. I have incurred the penalty of Faust: I have said the inevitable words to so many moments of so many hours. Gratitude sits awkwardly upon me: it produces a gasping incoherence —you will understand.

Ach, the loneliness here, the agonizing stupidity of these banal Christians about me: the childish ignorance and the childish annoyance of this healthy and well-meaning society—it is not my fault that I can simply fall back upon sense and impression as antidotes and opiates.

You see, there is no actuality of real life, that I should hate it or mingle with it or study it: merely the scholastic-pious and the athletic-ear-splitting factions. "So I am what I am and what you shun," to quote O'Shaughnessy. Meanwhile I must work, work, drive myself mad with it.

H. foolishly insisted upon carrying away some of my sins of commission in the way of verse: the quasi-dramatic sketch is uninteresting except to me as an experiment in form and metre and music: but I also gave him a few lyrics I wrote a few days before coming to you: will you see what you can make of them? The Winchester people, the authorities receive me with their customary show of interest: so that your latitudinarian impostor in priest's clothing has evoked his flattering recollection of me from his own sense of irresponsible vexatiousness—for which may the Sanctus Spiritus reward him. Acting on your suggestion, I have gracefully expressed in simple rhymes the sense of my privilege in having been allowed to pose as an extraordinary circumstance at the Dolores, and my sympathy with its members: but it is strongly flavoured with personalities of an irreverent kind:—so I don't enclose it. The old story—I am burdened with work and a distaste for a work and a necessity for working. All letters are luxuries in the writing, not to be recklessly indulged in. But you and the

other ministering angels of Israel can sometimes perform an act of charity by writing to Philistia.

I wish I were going to join you in October—though I am none the less persuaded that it is better for me to be here: the practical side of me is not a strong development, but it exists and tells me that I can improve my mercenary and pecuniary prospects by imbuing myself with hateful scholarship and classical furniture generally.

Shall you come down here at all before the Long? at least endeavour to persuade some one to let me personally conduct him about this Paradisal land of platitudes—it would be good for them—I don't feel entirely selfish in the suggestion.

I am casually making these remarks to you in the window of Seventh, which is a bank of flowers, arums, azaleas, etc.: my juniors are delightfully submissive though exacting in their demands that I should do their work after the manner of such here: I am tolerably peaceful "then the good moment goes": some repulsive drudgery of "exact demonstration" in scholarship, or some inane "prefects' meeting" fill up the hours: and so between reading and grinding at the mill of useless knowledge, and the petty trivialities of this place, life goes—there must be another—not that it matters. Vidal was intensely full of interest: analysed

with his usual clear critical acumen the points of difference between you and New College—and was otherwise confidential and considerate.

I find your Orthodox London among my possessions: enough to make you despair of getting hold of it again: I will do my possible to send it to you: you know the effort is worse than a chapel sermon.

Tell B. I will write: tell anyone else if that will impose upon them: my silences mean no more or less than my utterances. You will write.

I have rehearsed the Commination Service, inserting the Vice Chancellor in each imprecation—may it do him the good I expect from it. Addio.

To A.

College,
May 3, 1885.

Many thanks for the correspondence which I return. It has amused me: my unfounded prejudice against the Master revelled in what it considered an example of his hypocritical virtues. Observe his tone: you tell him plainly that he is talking wild nonsense at random: and his answer is Fagin's again—"Have you anything to say?" "An old man, my lord: an old man." The mild cherubicity of the sentiment! But I know nothing about the

man except that he amuses me, and thus fulfils a law of Christ. And you have at last discovered that Jessides was right: "put not your trust in man" but in yourself: for "ye are Gods." And you compare and contrast myself with myself and think you detect a lowered standard, a fall and decline, a decadence, a retrogression—and you think this because this time last year I wrote about "higher and lower," "sin," and indulged in serenely comforting ethics generally. Well, I did all that: will repeat the process, if I consider it profitable: but verily you seem to have passed out of that stage. You were in a condition of unpleasing remorse and unwholesome regret: I, knowing well enough the nature of the affliction, seriously and—may I say—with real hopes of doing something for you—set about the work of instilling comfort. And I had to select methods: to a soul or mind genuinely labouring under a burden of conscientious repentance and shame, it would have been insulting to say "you are under a delusion: you have no burden unless you choose to consider that you have"—it was kinder to go through the simple process of making belief to knock it off your shoulders—"best for you and best for me"—and therefore—"Yes, you have sinned: but sin is an essential to salvation: the sense of sin is a sign of holiness: spirituality is recognition of sin, etc." And what though I could not swear to my personal

conviction of what I said? if it helped you at all I surely had not done any mean or contemptible thing. I am much given to self-analysis: and often think that my supreme gift of inconsistency and accommodation to varied situations is a great blessing. And don't think that my words of last year were merely a curious and quaint kind of subtle pleasure to me: that I was dabbling in spiritual experiments, and had selected my nearest friend for the corpus vile: being incapable of bigotry (to put the case my way) of settled conviction (to put it yours) I cannot say now that I was insincere then: it was "all for the best." You think less of me? I may still pose as a friend perhaps, but no longer as a priest of the Most High? You will write to me when you want to waste a few minutes in light and casual converse, but will keep a reproachful silence when you are spiritually inclined for sympathy? Ah, that will render itself into a realistic sketch after Henry James, after Browning: but I shall not be quite so happy. And now, perhaps, your Christian nerves are being jarred and jangled into disgust? or, worst of all possibilities, you may imagine me to have assumed the very air of wounded friendship, of broken love—to be now writing under the command, at the dictation of sorrowful self-reproach. But no: I am waiting for Mass: I am perfectly calm and unmoved. And tell me what you think to be

true: I may be somewhat akin to "jesting Pilate": but I will "stay for an answer."

Your cottage catastrophe is irritating: the idea was charming—and what will you do? I have tried to ascertain from C. whether it will be possible for him to come down here for Concert, etc.: as yet had no answer:—but I live in hope. Whithersoever I fly for refuge, cold and rain pursue after me: as though melancholy marked me for her own, and wanted me to write sonnets on her tender and shivering graces: just now, the rain is shrieking along a fierce wind—and the Warden is to preach to-night. It is wonderfully good of H. to write —his *métier* is charity, except when he profanes the "Dolores" and its purposes by reading obscure versicules of unknown authors.

So you don't know when to believe me: well, is not that sense of uncertainty an element of strength to yourself? never to be sure that you have the truth from me, that you can read my meaning clear—that should be a real source of interest and a fresh motive for displaying your own transparent sincerity. It is hopeless to want to have a certainty—as Whitman will tell you—but act as though you knew—as though your action were very truth, and then you will find what you want. Human relations would be trivial enough without this fascinating feeling of dim insight into your brothers' hearts —we may be all deceivers and deceived together.

And the arrogance of certainty is a little coarse—one should be master of circumstances without the assumption of distinct knowledge about them. "Omnis Aristippum decuit color et status et res," quotes Pater with approval: and Heracleitus with his πάντα ῥεῖ. Is all this verbiage and classicalism required to prove that I am justified in laying flattering unctions to your soul, though I entertain grave doubts of their efficacy on myself—because I am well without them. I know a doctor who sent his patients to Lourdes as though he believed in the miracles: "it does them good." And these matters of spiritual, personal nature are not the daily subjects of love's study: salving souls is not the chief way of salvation. But possibly my own confession is making the situation impossible for you: very well, perhaps my confession is false—if you would prefer to think so, I will approve.

Love is larger than this: and love can include lies as well as soi-disant truths: what else is the meaning of "all in all." Do you know Christina's "The Convent Threshold"? It is a fragment of the Sermon on the Mount detached from the context, and transfigured in the process.

Forgive all this wearisome commonplace: I only write these things because they are to me the veriest truisms of life and love. When are Mods. over? I wish you whatever you wish yourself. Write when you can.

After all, where do you find this total discrepancy and disagreement? Can you fasten one verbal inconsistency—in strict logic, or the lawless logic of Mill—upon me? If I said last year "remorse is the beginning of higher things,"—could I have perpetrated so banal a remark?—have I unsaid it or undone it this year? I think that my earlier scriptures were the spiritualized expressions of my life-long faith—I adopted the language of convenient morality to apply it to the immoral doctrines of my personal gospel. It *is* true that "remorse etc.": true, if you *feel* it: I feel that it would be true for me, if I could first feel a consciousness of sin. I said nothing that I knew to be false: for, do I know anything? I have been inconsistently consistent throughout.

To C.

The College,
3.5.85.

You are making me very happy—and that is a divine faculty. But now your mention of Sark has thrown me into a passion of memories: I belong by race in part to Guernsey, and look upon the Channel Islands as my home: though without living there. But I know Sark, and how neither Hugo nor Swinburne can ever praise its absolute sublimity of loveliness—I

know what it is to stand on a dark winter's night on the cliffs and watch the passion play of winds and waters and lightnings: to feel parted from life and whirled into the general life of the world: and then the gradual sinking and dying of the storm orchestra until a sickly sun straggles over the dull-coloured sea, and you know that morning is come, and that dream dead: the very thought of Sark is an enthusiasm. And you, in the laughter of the summer, can have felt the love of Sark as deeply. Ah, life has its justification when these things are possible: and with these delights of the natural world, the kindred rapture of human love. I know that Love is God: and therefore I believe that God is Love—the two are one and interchangeable.

Am I ever to see you with these wretched eyes of mine, before the light of the sun is taken from them! for I must become blind some day I think. Once, I remember, you delighted me with promises to come to one of our Concerts: will you come at the end of our term here, at the end of July? this place is Paradisal, and would repay you of itself the weariness of coming.

The photographer promises me myself in a week—after the manner of such. I will not forget you: in matters of this unimportance, or any other. Strange, to think that one year ago, and I knew neither you nor B. nor O. nor

H., nor so many others—and now I cannot remember that I ever was unaware of your presence. It makes this "unintelligible world" dear as starlight, the power of simple love upon it, the love that "moves the sun with the other stars."

I have no time to write more, and you will at least know that it is not for lack of thoughts: though words may fail me.

To A.

College,
May 15, 1885.

I have not written lately because it seemed unnecessary: but now my "insolent self-assertion" (for your ascription to me of that Whitmanlike quality, many thanks) prompts me to congratulate you and express my real satisfaction at late occurrences. You know what I hold for eternal verity: and you will know that I detest the submissive attitude.

You scarcely displayed analytic acumen in your last letter: I am very self-confident and independent of others' opinions: but I cannot live without their companionship and love. Isolation is easy enough: but it is not good to be alone. And you will not suspect me of desertion or withdrawal now: beyond all the little trivialities and mean follies of all this

matter, I recognize the high laws of freedom at stake: I can laugh at the absurdity and the gaucherie, but I am none the less determined in the truth of this matter.

Oh, I am not inhuman, but rather all human: with all my nature developed. But I have a control over all passion which you lack: I can appear unreal and cold and insincere and contemptuous and contemptible, while you are simply natural. I had a letter from a cousin lately in which she says, "you live artificially, naturally, I live in chaos." That was true: my life is a study.

The main course is clear: "dismiss whatever insults your own soul." Perhaps you will look askance at advice or sympathy coming from my heartless heights of epicureanism: that I can't help. Let me really know whether I can do or write anything that may help you in any way. On the whole, this hardly seems a situation calling for much pity: such pity as I do feel mainly has my elders and betters, my pastors and masters, for its object.

There is beautiful spring weather here: I am peacefully writing English verse and feeling kind towards the Race: Read Whitman: he will never fail you, that is the test of divinity: Jesus and Shelley and Whitman, they are stedfast in faith, never wavering. Men think that the Whitman doctrine is a mean unwholesome poison trying to pass for the breath of God:

they talk of "moral sanitation": that love must be eschewed when it claims lordship and domination upon the flesh: that life is to be a solemn and dignified affection and kindly good-naturedness. We believe and know that life is something more than that: we justify the existence of evil by denying its existence. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world!" has that a meaning? verily I find a plain meaning in it: I believe it to be an exact and scientific statement of an unending and essential truth.

Jesus is ascended—the faith reigns—away from all clashing dogma and creed, away from the strife of tongues, there in the clear beauty of the spring skies, there is Jesus the divine Love: not senile scraps of Plato-cum-Prayer Book, but Christ Jesus, very God, very Man, the power of God and the Word of God, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Believe it as you will—poetical fancy, dream vision, fable, myth, lie—still there throbs through its infinite wonder the truth of its infinite Love. We are jealous and cold and distrustful: I coldly analyse, you passionately abuse: fools both, whilst the faith is one and indivisible.

For the present I must stop here.

"Is victory great? do we think victory great?

So it is—But now it seems to be when it cannot be helped, that defeat is great.

And that death and dismay are great."

To A.

College,
May 21, 1885.

Love prevails always: it prevails inevitably—the lordship of love through sorrow and suffering and trial—prevails to the end. Triumph is assured through failure, through defeat: I congratulate you. For the correspondence—that is variously beautiful.

For my words, you express thanks: well they are merely I, merely my life: I know, in my arrogance of certitude, I know the truth: the truth that will make whole. You wrong me: but I acknowledge that you are right, being you, to reject the Church. I still cling to her universal possibilities—not for ease, not from fear, but from faith and love. No true efforts clash—the world is all subject to love in any form. We are at one in heart. I must leave off this. I shall remember you at the Eucharist on Sunday. I will write to B.—he will not resent that. Always yours in all faith and love.

To A.

College,
May 30, 1885.

Hugo's death is magnificent—full of the glory of his supreme life—I would give anything to

be able to see his face and kiss his lips. There is no man living who is worthy to stand beside him, but Whitman—and he will pass to the dark soon. A pilgrimage to him is one of my fixed purposes some day. O. has written at length and seems disposed to take our side. But the world is so strange—Hugo is dead—my friend here exiled—and the saints jubilant everywhere. I shall be very pressed with work for the few ensuing weeks, and letters will be things merely of necessity—but at all times I will be happy in doing anything you ask of me.

To B.

College,
May 31, 1885.

Your letter reaches me amid a fortunate coincidence of O., C., and some others—I am fulfilled with a multitude of cursing and blessing from you all. This is at least a laugh-provoking catastrophe—perhaps it has more weighty elements. Life is pleasant everywhere and everyhow. Yes, if you are able to endure it. I am perfectly free to inflict myself upon you—almost at any date between August 1st and September 1st, and inasmuch as Winchester might be less paradisal than usual for you, that seems the only alternative delight. But in my selfish voracity I don't see why C. should

not also come to our Concert. You see it is better that he should meet the full summer glory of Winchester than that he should meet me—the place is at least of equal value—Yes, I must adhere to that—if C. will not be alarmed at the prospect.

A. is rather vague: seems to have no precise ideas of his future line of action—perhaps inevitably so. "Preaching the truth" has an air of the grotesque. What is not truth? Accept everything surely, even Christian virtue: there is no sorrow, no evil—unless you make them. Whitman has the vitality, the virtue of Philistia transmuted to a deathless and crystal strength of spirit—war and art would be perfected in him. But Whitman is a dream except for the few who know him—has his night visions too of Christian virtue and vice-Chancellors—and the awaking is brusque, deficient in refinement. One disastrous outcome of this is A.'s absolute refusal to accept the priesthood—now, when such as he are demanded for the priesthood—his strong "sense of duty" —curses on that abstraction, when it takes shape—will not suffer him to do violence to his reason and his conviction—what a depth of wrong-headedness appears to me there! Well, he would never be quite happy in my beautiful city of music and light and flowers and incense and Leaves of Grass—that is a visioned Hesperid island, never to be realized.

Don't inconvenience your arrangements—but could you give me even a general idea of a possible date at which I could be with you, if that is to be? Other matters rather hang on that for me. Work is somewhat pressing now —so am unable to write at length.

To C.

COLLEGE,
7.6.85.

Of course you will come to Winchester—as though it was for the sake of seeing me that you were to come! A. will be here—likewise, I hope, Harry, with whom I have yet to become acquainted—you must be with us. You could come on Saturday 25th, so as to have a Sunday here, the Concert is the next night, and the peculiar institution known to us as "Domum" on Tuesday: we go down on Wednesday. As to B.'s kind proposal, the first part of August would suit me best—and the earlier the better for some other arrangements of mine. So that if it would suit him, I should be perfectly free to go to him from Winchester at once—but no time would be absolutely impossible for me. You will come? I fear I know of no one who would be able to give you hospitality, since the place is infested with old Wykehamists—but I can easily secure you a room somewhere.

H. and O. intend to come down on Tuesday—which will be delightful, also amusing. A. who naturally was unable to pass through Winchester without staying a few hours, seemed singularly happy—but for the plague of relatives. But all the fortunes and friendships of our little lives seem swallowed up in the thought of Hugo's death—it is as though the sun were stricken blind in Heaven, and the voice of the sea were silent for ever—one does not look for the death of the sun and sea, for all their centuries—and yet Hugo, the elemental spirit of the world's poetry, is dead. The impression of it is physical, actual. And the majesty of the French people in their sorrow! Well, Whitman liveth—and he is light of light. Yes, Richards possibly inserted a rhapsody of mine—with a casual misprint here and there which increased the poetry of the original—poor Rugby with its taste gradually educated up to that! Do you know Welldon, the new head of Harrow? he preached here the other day the most perfectly beautiful sermon that I can remember: the man's face is very winning. He told me that he would rather be going anywhere than to Harrow—which he detests.

A Christian wants me to talk to him—*hélas*.

To A.

College,
July 14, 1885.

As to the English verse I am satisfied—I had a vow to make them accept blank verse—I intend to make an Elizabethan quasi-epic—all the beautiful heroes who lived lives worth living and knew they were men with passions—and got on in the world at the same time. Congratulations on the tutor—stealing a march on the guardians—a perfect Sophoclean irony in the idea of perverting his pure and pastoral mind. They are—i.e., W. M. Rossetti and the Gilchrists, etc.—getting up a subscription in support of Whitman who is destitute of means and unable to work—curious to see how the appeal will be answered. Imagine—a heat visible and tangible, and audible, burning away to the heart of the world—a sky of liquid fiery sapphire—and withal three weeks detestable exams.—it will kill me. In fact, I refuse to work at all: I read Lucretius in the sunshine—or Hugo. Class lists are satisfactory—I don't imagine B. expected anything higher.

To A.

COLLEGE,
July 21, 1885.

Mrs. Dick will be with you to-morrow: she will give you my love, and will try, better than I can, to tell you all I feel or think.

I cannot write more now, but—

Oh! je suis avec vous! J'ai cette sombre joie
Ceux qu'on accable, ceux qu'on frappe, et qu'on foudroie
M'attient: je me sens leur frère.

Ah, though even the good saints are blind in their kindness, yet "il faut bien quelqu'un qui soit pour les étoiles!"

I began melancholy: now I am laughing—there is summer and the thought of love, Sappho of Lesbos, and the soft winds—and the authorities. It is real, but very insignificant. I believe in the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the assertion of the body, and the love everlasting.

Under the moon's high glory, and all stars
Fluting their night-song, brother of my love.
As by their light I take upon my lips
Thy heart's gold-starry song, love-laden winds
Linger within the music, and the night
Murmurs. Love, Love,—how all the world
Leaps to the lyre of love, and clear, far spheres
Clash out to love their music: and all seas
Sway to the thrill of love! and now this night
That floats into the pulsing land of dreams
Where memories are soft, thy love hath turned
To preludes, that before the terrible sun
Strike his great note of thunder, I may drink
Low laughter from thy lips, and bear mine own
To thy fair well of sorrow, and may wash
My feet within thy tears. Now our Lord Love
Give thee to fling his music on all airs
That earth-dimmed eyes may take pure peace, to feel
Love's whisper cool upon their throb, and lips
Dust-littered from the earth may lilt awhile
Love's melodies, inspired to know the stars
Wherefrom Love looks in blessing, and to catch
Love's musical soul in all dream silences.
And clang of dreadful hatred. Brother
Brother within the cloudland canst thou see
Thrones set in the larger air stream, whence all life
Shall pour high esctasies and utter Love
That spheres must shout to hearken as they whirl
Down the full seas of space? shall we end so?
Yes, we shall not one die, for music lives.
And life is Love's best music. Life and Love.
And Music—an these be, can men and women
Die from upon the earth? we shall not die:
But live, by love and music."

L.

Printed in Great Britain by

UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED

WOKING AND LONDON

Selections from Allen & Unwin's List

The Problem of "Hamlet"

By the Right Hon. J. M. ROBERTSON

Demy 8vo. *5s. net.*

"The Problem of *Hamlet*" is an instalment and sample of a comprehensive work on "The Canon of Shakespeare," in which it is sought to apply scientific critical principles to the long-standing æsthetic dispute on the "mystery" of the "character" of Shakespeare's most famous personage. The method is to trace the growth of the play from its pre-Shakespearean form, framed by Thomas Kyd, and to show that the "mystery" arises fortuitously out of a mere delayed action, in Kyd's manner, for which there was originally a simple explanation, that disappeared in the process of adaptation. All the leading theories of the character of Hamlet, down to the latest German, are passed in review, and shown to miss their aim by overlooking the structural evolution of the play.

The Ajax of Sophocles

Translated by R. C. TREVELYAN

Large Crown 8vo. *Paper, 2s.; Cloth, 3s. 6d.*

The People's Theatre

By ROMAIN ROLLAND

Translation by BARRETT H. CLARK

Crown 8vo. *5s. 6d. net.*

The author here touches on many vital aspects of such a playhouse of which Englishmen have but very recently become conscious. While not hesitating to shatter idols, he has a constructive programme too, and ends up "Everything remains to be done."

"He has much to say which is fresh and suggestive."—*Daily Telegraph.*

". . . the most stimulating of all the books to be consulted on problems of theatre reform. . . ."—*New Statesman.*

The Fourteenth of July, and Danton

Two Plays of the French Revolution

By ROMAIN ROLLAND

Translated with a Preface by BARRETT H. CLARK

Crown 8vo. *6s. net.*

For years Mr. Rolland has striven to supply the masses with plays of inspirational and constructive value, and the two which are here for the first time introduced to readers of English are amongst the best products of the world-wide effort to bring all classes together in the theatre.

"'The 14th July' gains our respect and admiration; it is spiritual and idealistic."—*Manchester Guardian.*

Out and About: London in War-time

By THOMAS BURKE

Crown 8vo. 5*s. net.* *Postage 6d.*

"A delightful . . . joyous . . . lusty little volume. We have many writers of essays in England now, but none has quite the sparkling zest in crowded life which is so marked a quality of Mr. Burke. His enjoyment of 'London with the many sins' is in lineal descent from Lamb's, and it is far wider."—*Times.*

"A delightful book which Dickens might have written. Thomas Burke is a realist, with a quick sense of the pathos and humour of life, and a subtle charm of style . . . his comment on people and places is as shrewd and piquant as are his swift, graphic descriptions of them."—*Sketch.*

"Mr. Burke is our greatest living authority on the urban vagabond and the master of a style as beguiling as Murger's. . . . Mr. Burke's delightful book . . . which the gentle Elia would have loved as a bed-book."—*Morning Post.*

"An extraordinarily vivid little volume. Scarcely a paragraph which does not hold some extraordinary bit of description, a word picture painted by a writer of genius . . . as it were Brangwyn drawings done into prose."—*Tatler.*

Nights in Town

A London Autobiography By THOMAS BURKE

Crown 8vo. Library Edition 5*s. net.* *Postage 4d.*

"No question about the cleverness of these impressions . . . an achievement worthy of Poe."—*Westminster Gazette.* "Thomas Burke is an artist."—*Daily News.* "He has 'cornered' London."—*Daily Chronicle.* "Every chapter is alive."—*Daily Express.*

An Ethiopian Saga By RICHMOND HAIGH

Foolscap 8vo. 5*s. net.*

"Extremely interesting . . . a book quite out of the common."—*Times.*

"Has the charm of complete novelty . . . unusual freshness and a curious fascination of style. Its simple thought and often the great natural beauty of its imagery and its depth of feeling ought to bring the book many readers who will appreciate its charm."—*Liverpool Post.*

Working My Way Around the World

By HARRY A. FRANCK

Illustrated with Photographs and with Maps

Crown 8vo. 6*s. 6d. net.*

This is an abridgment of the famous travel book, "A Vagabond Journey around the World." Mr. Franck, just after leaving college, started out without money to make a trip around the world. He walked much of the way, sometimes meeting strange people with whom he could communicate only by signs, and never following the beaten track if he could get along any other way.

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LIMITED

DATE DUE

APR 7 '70			
GAYLORD			PRINTED IN U.S.A.

NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE
821.8J63S
C001
SOME WINCHESTER LETTERS OF LIONEL JOHNSO
3 2611 00065206 1